

ITALIA!

Issue 124 March 2015 £4.40

www.italytravelandlife.com

HOLIDAYS PROPERTY FOOD WINE CULTURE PEOPLE

AMALFI'S JEWEL

Take time out for peace and tranquility on
the stunning coastal island of Ischia

The beaches of Venice

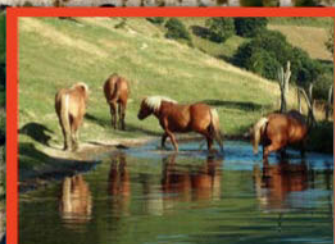
Get away from the city
and relax on the Lido

HEALTHY ITALIAN RECIPES TO ENJOY

A NEW WAY TO BUY

The benefits of fractional
property ownership

The best red wines from Puglia



**HORSES ON
THE LAKE**
A remarkable tale

THE UK'S AWARD-WINNING MAGAZINE ABOUT ITALY



Enjoy real Italian coffee at home.



Intuitive digital touch screen display with intelligent feedback



Auto-clean patented carafe that automatically heats and froths milk



Freshly grinds beans for a crema-rich and luxuriously aromatic coffee

Perfect coffee the easy way, designed with Italian style to suit every home. At the touch of a button the compact De'Longhi Bean to Cup machine gives you frothy cappuccinos, silky smooth lattes and authentic espressos in seconds, delivering you delicious, irresistible coffee every time. To enjoy real Italian coffee at home please visit:

www.seriousaboutcoffee.com

or call: 0845 600 6845



Scan here to find out how to get your FREE Service with De'Longhi Coffee Club

Free De'Longhi Coffee App



Available on the App Store

De'Longhi

Better Everyday

Welcome!



We've had a raft of letters of late (one of which you can read on page 19), requesting far more coverage of the region of Campania in southern Italy. It boasts plenty of summer heat, but also fine wines, plenty of spicy food and, of course, Naples, an exciting and teeming city with a wealth of culture.

In this issue we visit one of the area's islands, taking time to explore volcanic Ischia. Turn to page 30 to join us on the journey. And next month? Be sure to read of our exploits on Capri, one of Campania's other island retreats.

Many of you will be off skiing in Italy at this time of year, when the snow is at its very best. Alas, for many of us, après-ski involves little more than a visit to a local bar and a bowl of steaming hot cheese. Want something more of a gastronomic skiing experience? Then join Sebastian Cresswell-Turner on page 48.

Elsewhere in this issue we take a look at how you can buy into a fantastic Italian property without busting the bank by engaging in the ever-popular practice of fractional ownership; we explore the Venice Lido – an under-rated though stunning aspect of the city; we sample some stunning wines from Puglia; there are recipes that are just perfect for slimming down now that we're well into the New Year and we present you with news, reviews, language and more. As ever, I invite you to enjoy the issue.

Paul P.

Paul Pettengale Editor

PS Italia's brand new guide to City Breaks and Weekend Escapes is on sale now (£7.99). Visit www.italytravelandlife.com/italyguides for details.

SUBSCRIBE TO ITALIA!

Subscribe to *Italia!* and save money on the usual price* and get the magazine delivered directly to your door every month! Turn to page 38 for more information.

The order only



*A Day Trip to Ischia.
Page 30.*

AWARD WINNER!
The Italian Tourist Board voted *Italia!* the 'Best Overall Publication 2011'



THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



JANE SMITH started our new *Building the Dream* column in the last issue of *Italia!* when she bought a house in Le Marche and, well, knocked it down. In her second instalment she

invites the builders back, this time to start laying the foundations for her new dream property. Follow how she – and her land – was transformed on page 69.



FLEUR KINSON writes our regular *Homes in...* feature for those of you who are looking to purchase property in Italy. Want a touch of luxury but don't have endless resources?

Then you should consider fractional ownership, an increasingly popular way of experiencing the high life for less. Find out more with Fleur on page 20.



SEBASTIAN CRESSWELL-TURNER returned to our pages last issue with his popular *Gazzetta* column, and he's back again with his bi-lingual exploration of Italian culture on

page 29. And then on page 48 you can join him again as he takes time to go skiing in northern Italy – though this is a skiing trip with a difference!



20



75 30



IN THIS ISSUE

March 2015



48

PROPERTY

20 HOMES FOR FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP

Fleur Kinson explains the advantages of this increasingly popular way of buying luxury property in Italy.

63 PROPERTY FOCUS: PUGLIA

Home to the famous *trulli*, Puglia is served by two major airports, and the property market here is buoyant.

69 BUILDING THE DREAM

The builders have returned to begin laying the foundations for **Jane Smith's** new house.



54

HOLIDAYS

30 A DAY TRIP TO ISCHIA

Any visit to Naples is enhanced by a trip to the islands. **Robin Crews** finds that it's easy to hop over the water to Ischia.

48 GASTRO SKIING

Sebastian Cresswell-Turner discovers the best way to combine good food with good skiing in the Italian Dolomites.

54 LIDO DI VENEZIA

While the crowds flock to Venice, **Adrian Mourby** finds a much more relaxing way of life on the Lido.

CULTURE

29 GAZZETTA ITALIA!

Sebastian Cresswell-Turner discusses the Italians' love of a good conspiracy theory.

40 THE HORSES OF BISBINO

Jan Mazzoni reports on the dramatic story of a herd of wild Haflinger horses who live near Lake Como.

47 FAST ART

Freya Middleton returns to Michelangelo's self-portrait *The Deposition of Christ*.

73 FAST CULTURE

Joe Gartman takes us on a tour of the *nasoni* fountains of Rome.



40

FOOD & DRINK

75 FOUR TAKES ON WATERCRESS

The first bunches of this wonderful salad leaf will soon be appearing at your local market.

80 HEALTHY COOKING

With author and chef **Ursula Ferrigno**.

84 BUY ITALIA!

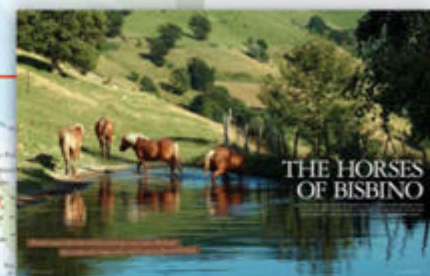
Jarred vegetables from your high street.

89 DRINK ITALIA!

Paul Pettengale tests Puglia's best reds.

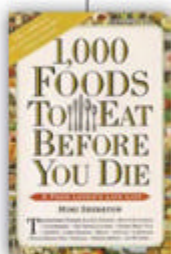


84



MORE ITALIA!

- 6 READERS' PHOTO COMPETITION**
The best each month wins a bottle of Nino Franco Prosecco and cooler!
- 9 ITALIAN NEWS**
Your round-up of the biggest and best stories from around Italy this month.
- 12 TOP PICKS**
Our choice of the best new Italian products.
- 14 EVENTS IN MARCH**
Roman Generals, exploding carts and wayward donkeys are all on the agenda for those who choose to travel to Italy this month.
- 16 VIEWPOINT**
The vineyards of Trentino.
- 19 LETTERS**
Readers share their stories and pictures



from their experiences in Italy. The best wins a £25 delicibo voucher!

- 38 SUBSCRIBE TO ITALIA!**
Never miss an issue of *Italia!* – and get a free book to enjoy.

- 70 PAST ITALIA!**
The story and impact of the original Fiat 500..
- 87 ASK THE EXPERTS**
Insider knowledge on living, working and travelling in Italy.
- 93 BOOK REVIEWS**
Italy in literary form.
- 94 GETTING THERE**
Plan your flight to Italy.
- 98 MY ITALIA!**
Author and teacher **Carmela Sophia Sereno** talks about her family background and her love of southern Italian cooking.

ON THE COVER



READERS' PHOTO COMPETITION!



Send us your favourite photos from your Italian travels, and each month the best photo will win a bottle of **Nino Franco Rustico Prosecco** and cooler!*

THIS MONTH'S WINNER

Nick Jackson, London

"My photo is of the sunset over Florence from the top of Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore."



▲ *Jean Sawyer, Morpeth*

"This was taken at the flower show in Perugia, where my husband lived for 10 years."

Dave Harcombe, Thorpe in Balne

"Serene Salò, Lake Garda. A beautiful day in a beautiful location. Iconic Lake Garda is always a pleasure to visit and Salò has a magic all to itself."





Mark Kenny, Altrincham
“This is a picture of the Tiber taken during a trip to Rome.”

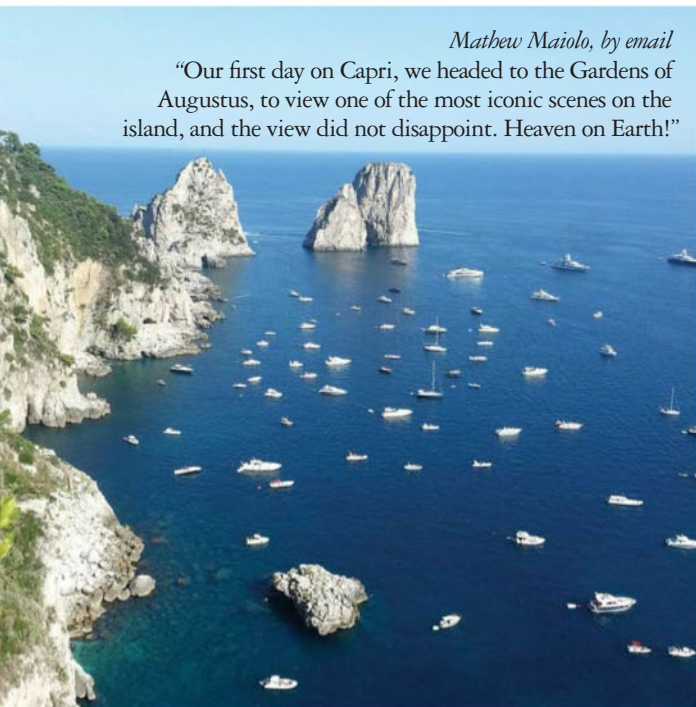
▼ *Hilary McCumiskey, Chorley*

“This photo is of a stunning tree in the hills of Piemonte near a town called Cortemilia in Cuneo. It had frozen like this overnight last February to -4 degrees. The branches looked so spectacular. I used the images to create my own Christmas cards. Unfortunately, this tree has since been chopped down and used for firewood...”



▲ *Lorraine & Sid Hope, Pinner*

“This photo was taken in June 2014 in Taormina old town, Sicily. My husband and I were celebrating our wedding anniversary and had never been to Sicily. We thought this photo taken whilst sitting in a restaurant captured the essence of a beautiful moment in a beautiful setting.”



Mathew Maiolo, by email

"Our first day on Capri, we headed to the Gardens of Augustus, to view one of the most iconic scenes of the island, and the view did not disappoint. Heaven on Earth!"

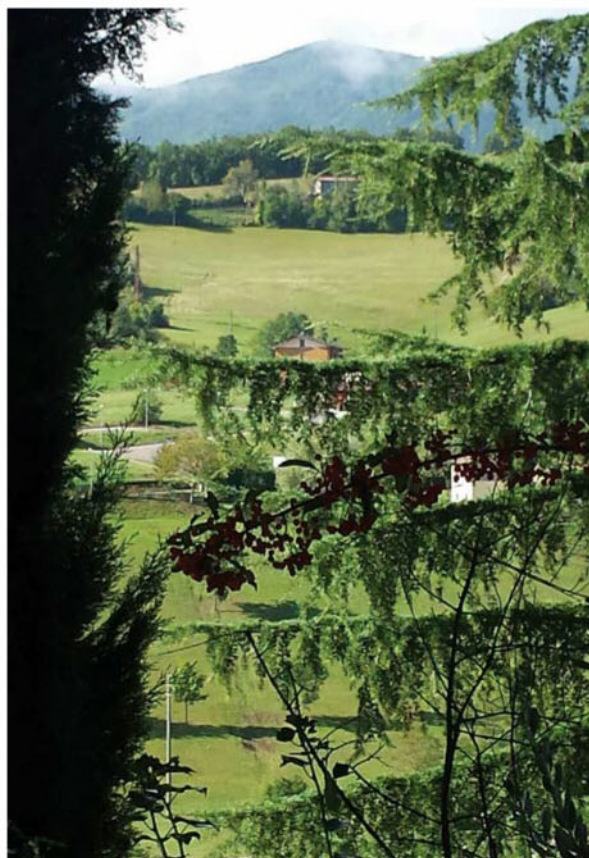


▲ *Ginger Pozzini, Newport, Rhode Island*

"Bird's-eye view of the Val d'Orcia. Taken while enjoying lunch on the panoramic terrace of a producer of organic pecorino cheese. The peacocks freely roam the grounds and feed on insects and small creatures. This one is enjoying the view as much as I am!"

▼ *Jennifer Mozzi, Escondido, California*

"I took this photograph in September from the Castello Malaspina-Dal Verme in Bobbio (PC). My grandfather immigrated from Bobbio in the early 1900s and it was my dream to visit his hometown and meet my relatives. I had an amazing time!"



▲ *Arne Lie, Foerresfjorden, Norway*

"This picture was taken in Rome in October 2014. To be precise, it was taken from the Pincian Hill [a hill in the northeast quadrant of the historical centre], at a place I pass whenever I am walking from my hotel on Piazza di Spagna up to the Pincian Hill and down to Piazza del Popolo. Sunset on Pincio can be like this in October. I visit Rome several times a year, but never in June and August."

HOW TO ENTER Email high-resolution (300dpi) jpegs of your photos of Italy to italia@anthem-publishing.com or send prints to 'Reader Photo Competition' at the address given on page 18. Please include a brief explanation of your photo, plus your name, delivery address and a phone number (for our couriers). You must be over 18 to enter.

READER OFFER *Italia!* readers get a 10 per cent discount off Nino Franco wines from www.sommelierschoice.com until 1 June 2015 by entering the code 'italia10' at the checkout.

Please note: Any photos you submit must be your own work and you must have the right to send them for inclusion on this page. By sending your entry, you are confirming that *Italia!*'s use of your photo(s) will not constitute infringement of any rights, and confirming that you are over 18.



*Prosecco and cooler delivered to mainland UK addresses only

THIS MONTH

March 2015

In **Italian news** this month, a row brews over the sale of Prosecco on tap in the UK, and the A-list celebrities who didn't get their way...

ITALY OFFERS THE CHEAPEST RENT IN EUROPE

When it comes to buying a home abroad, one of the most important considerations is the cost of living in that particular country. Well, happily, a new guide, the Numbeo Cost of Living Index, should make things a lot easier, calculating everything from property fees to the price of a meal out. And some of its figures might just surprise you. Did you know, for example, that rental prices in Italy are far cheaper than anywhere else in Europe? Slightly less reassuring is that eating out in Italy is currently more costly than it is in Sweden. You could always cook at home, though – the cost of groceries in Italy is cheaper than in both France and Belgium. Whatever you decide to do, perhaps mull it over with a coffee first – on average, a cup of cappuccino in an Italian café or restaurant will cost you just €1.31. To see all of the statistics, visit www.numbeo.com



COPS UNCOVER £38 MILLION TREASURE CHEST

Police in Switzerland must have thought they'd walked onto the set of an Indiana Jones movie when they raided the warehouses of an accused Sicilian art dealer in January and discovered thousands of rare antiquities worth around £38million. The find came as part of an investigation into the activities of Basel-based dealer Gianfranco Becchina, who was accused of being part of an antiquities-trafficking network that involved tomb raiders in Italy, along with dealers and buyers across the world. In total, the warehouses contained 5,361 vases, bronze statues and frescoes, which may now go on public display before being returned to museums in southern Italy. "This is by a long shot the biggest recovery in history in terms of the quantity and quality of the archaeological treasures," Carabinieri general Mariano Mossa said. Becchina will not be prosecuted for possessing the items, as the charges against him have now expired.

All photography © iStock, unless otherwise stated



...SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...

ITALIANS TO BE PIPPED IN THE GRAPE STAKES

Germany is set to overtake Italy to become the world's third largest wine-consuming nation by 2018, according to a new report by market-research group The IWSR. However, it is believed that this will be more down to the Italians' disillusionment with their country's vineyards than with any great surge of wine's popularity in Germany. The report estimates that by 2018, the Germans will consume the equivalent of 3.3 billion bottles of wine annually, compared to the 3.28 billion bottles drunk by the Italians. In the same period of time, it is expected that the US will strengthen its position as the world's leading wine-consuming nation, with France remaining in second place.

ITALIAN NAVY IN GRAND-SCALE MIGRANT RESCUE

Christmas was a busy period for the Italian Navy, who had to rescue more than African 2,000 migrants off the coast of Sicily. The men, women and children were stranded on a number of boats, with around 1,000 being rescued on Christmas Eve and another 1,300 on Christmas Day. Italian media reported that a Nigerian woman gave birth on one of the boats, while a man was found dead on another. In the past year, Italy has seen a massive rise in the number of migrants trying to reach its shores, many of them from Eritrea and Syria.





VENICE CRUISE
It's a debate that has been raging for years. Waves in Venice, the largest cruise ship to sail through the city in November, has settled the argument. The passionate and passionate was put all ship gross to consider many – the Guide city's main. However, on, the judge overturned the of appeal, after that a ban would annual loss of 30 the city. Despite the International Association voluntarily refrain from largest ships to the more favourable operational. H Cate Blanchett Douglas a who ad the p “sky ba I

Photograph © PA Photos



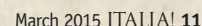
It's a debate that's been creating waves in Venice for years – should large cruise ships be allowed to sail through the city? Back in November, it looked as if the argument had finally been settled when, following a passionate campaign, a ban was put in place to prevent all ships over 96,000 gross tonnes – which are considered eyesores by many – from sailing along the Guidecca Canal to the city's main cruise terminal. However, just two months on, the judgement has been overturned by the regional court of appeal, after it was estimated that a ban would result in an annual loss of 300,000 tourists to the city. Despite this, the Cruise Lines International Association has chosen to voluntarily refrain from bringing its largest ships to the city until a new, more favourable route becomes operational. Hollywood A-listers Cate Blanchett and Michael Douglas are among those who added their names to the petition to have the “skyscrapers of the sea” banned from the city. It just goes to show that celebrities don't always get their own way!



We love nothing more than someone who takes pride in their job, and Indrit Mema certainly fits into that category. The Albanian father-of-two, 38, uses a machine to paint white lines on the streets of Cosio Valtellino in northern Italy, and such is the speed and meticulousness of his work that a video of him going about his business has become an internet sensation across the country. The video, filmed on a smartphone by his business partner, shows Mema covering nearly a kilometre of road in just four minutes, a feat that has earned him the nickname "Speedy Gonzalez". Cynical Italian newspapers have attributed the video's success to the fact that Italian roads are usually of such poor quality. But Mema is somewhat more generous towards the country he has called home for the past 17 years. "The people here are fantastic for their dedication to work," he says. "Whatever I know, it was taught to me by the Italians." See the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR-vCnTWcs

The battle for the right to host the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games is hotting up. Giovanni Malago, President of the Italian Olympic Committee, and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi met with IOC President Thomas Bach in Switzerland in January, and the IOC man was impressed by what he heard. "During the meeting, the clear and strong commitment of Prime Minister Renzi became even more obvious," he said. So far, Rome and Boston are the only two cities to have put in a formal bid for the Games. The IOC will make its decision in Lima, Peru, on 15 September 2017.

Milan's famous Vigorelli velodrome, where Fausto Coppi broke the world hour record, fell into a state of disrepair in the 1990s when Italian cycling turned its attention to road racing. However, it's now set for a £4.84 million facelift, beginning in August, that will see both the stadium and the 397-metre wooden track being revamped. "When it opens, it will be a big day for Milan and for Italy," enthused Daniele L'Aquila, who is part of the renovation committee. "It's an important place in cycling, in Italy and in the world."



ITALIA!'S *Top picks*

Our favourite **Italian products** for March. Food and art, gentlemen's accessories, learning holidays – and a perhaps new handbag...

READ THIS!



▲ GINO D'ACAMPO'S TASTE OF THE SUN

Bring some warmth into your heart (and kitchen!) with Gino D'Acampo's *A Taste of the Sun* (Hodder & Stoughton, £7.99). The second spin-off book from his popular TV series, *Gino's Italian Escape*, it helps you to conjure up treats such as Tuscan baked fennel, and baked polenta with oozing Gorgonzola. Your friends and family will soon be begging to come for dinner!

▼ THE CUFF LINKS OF VENICE

You've heard the phrase "wearing your heart on your sleeve", but how about wearing Venice on your sleeve? It is nearly Valentine's Day and the man in your life will love these subtly stylish, rhodium-plated cuff links which depict a gondola sailing lazily past the famous Rialto Bridge. Not only will they make him look well-travelled and cosmopolitan, but they're sure to provide an interesting talking point at parties. £14.99 from www.thecufflinkstore.co.uk



WEAR THESE!

FERRARI MURAL

Ferraris aren't known for their subtlety (that's why we love them!) and this mural will jump out at your guests the minute they walk into the room. Formed of three pieces with a combined measurement of 1.58 x 2.32 metres, it depicts one of the marque's most famous models from three different angles. Let's face it, few of us can afford to buy the cars themselves, but with one of these on the wall, at least we can pretend! £23.99 from www.iwantoneofthose.com



TOP 3...THIS MONTH'S TOP 3...THIS MONTH'S TOP 3...THIS MONTH'S TOP 3...

Top 3 Italian-themed DVDS

Chances are it's still too cold to go out, so poor yourself a glass of wine, settle back in front of the fire and watch one of these new or recent releases about Italy...

1 GREAT CONTINENTAL RAILWAY JOURNEYS
Having retired from the House of Commons at the 2005 General Election, Michael Portillo has got his career back on track (sorry!) as a presenter of railway-themed TV shows. The third series of his acclaimed BBC programme has particular interest for us Italy aficionados because it features, among others, the route from Rome to Taormina on the east coast of Sicily. It's one of the country's most picturesque railway journeys, and the best bit is that your ticket will only cost you the price of the DVD! (Released 23 March)



EAT THIS!



CARLUCCIO'S PESCHE AL DOLCETTO

If, like us, you've already given up on your new year diet, pop down to your nearest Carluccio's and snap up a couple of jars of peaches in dolcetto wine. The sweetness of the fruit combines with the liquorice and almond notes of the dolcetto grape to create a taste experience that would provide a satisfying finale to any dinner, whether you serve them up on their own or add a dollop of ice cream. £5.95 for 650g from www.carluccios.com



ART DECO-STYLE TOURISM POSTERS

If you've got the money to splash out on some wall art, you'd be hard-pushed to find anything cooler than one of Pullman Editions' art deco-style tourism posters. Executed by leading artists, their bright colours and bold imagery perfectly capture the glamour and sophistication of the 1920s and 30s, when places like Lake Como, Venice and Tuscany enjoyed a golden period of popularity among the glitterati. They're pretty exclusive too: each poster is limited to a run of 280. £395 from www.pullmaneditions.com

A NEW HANDBAG

Some women will argue that you can never have enough handbags, but maybe they'd change their mind if they owned one of Appassionata Boutique's beautiful pieces, handmade using leather sourced from Florence. Appassionata Boutique combines the creative vision of owner and interior designer Dawn Cavanagh-Hobbs with the exquisite workmanship of the Ribichini family, who've been making leather goods since the early 1900s and have designed bags for the likes of Gucci, Prada and Bottega Veneta. So quality is guaranteed – and even better, you can get it for a fraction of the price charged by other designer brands. www.appassionataboutique.com



STUDY AT BORGO EGNAZIA IN PUGLIA

Think studying is boring? Then you obviously haven't been to Borgo Egnazia. This sumptuous hotel on the Adriatic coast in Puglia is home to the Nowhere Else academies, where you can spend five days learning anything from photography to fishing, cookery to cocktail shaking. And with an award-winning spa on-site, not to mention a wealth of culture and glorious countryside in all directions, the downtime's not too bad either. www.borgoegnazia.com



TRY THIS!

THIS MONTH'S TOP 3...THIS MONTH'S TOP 3...THIS MONTH'S TOP 3...THIS

2 LOVE IN VENICE

Dutch violinist André Rieu has been hosting open-air concerts in Maastricht's romantic Vrijthof square every summer for the past ten years. To mark this milestone, he decided he needed to do something extra-special, and the theme he chose was "Love In Venice". The resulting show, staged last summer, is now featured on DVD in all its glory, and watching the maestro perform wonderful Italian music against a mock Venetian backdrop of the Doge's Palace and the Rialto Bridge is a sight to behold.



3 HUMAN CAPITAL

With dinner eaten and the dishes done (or left until the morning) there's no better way to round off the evening than with a good movie. And they don't come much more nailbiting than Paolo Virzì's 2013 thriller *Human Capital*, now out on DVD (cert 15). The plot centres around a road accident that occurs on the night before Christmas, and examines the effects it has on the families of those involved. Presented in Italian with English subtitles, it's absorbing stuff.



EVENTS IN MARCH 2015

Roman Generals, exploding carts and wayward donkeys are all on the agenda for those who choose to travel to **Italy this March**. Intrigued? Then step this way to find out more...

1	MOSTRA DELLE AZALEE 1 March	TOSCA 1-12 March	PRIMAVERA DEI VINI 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 March	
2	<i>Rome</i>	<i>Rome</i>	<i>Rovescala</i>	
3	If you suffer from hay fever, you might want to avoid the Spanish Steps in Rome today. To celebrate the coming of spring, around 3,000 vases of pink, white and red azaleas are left at this picturesque setting, filling the air with floral scent and providing a fantastic photo opportunity. The phrase "say it with flowers" has never been more apt (date to be confirmed – see local press for details).	If you're looking for a true taste of Italian culture, you can't get much better than a performance of Puccini's opera at Rome's historic Teatro Costanzi. The Italian composer's rousing three-act piece is a tale of love and loss set against the backdrop of Napoleon's invasion of Italy, and is as historically educational as it is entertaining. This production is conducted by the world-renowned Donato Renzetti and directed by Alessandro Talevi.	It goes without saying that wine is enjoyable at any time of year, but in the small town of Rovescala, Lombardy, their passion for the grape peaks in the spring. It's an idyllic setting, surrounded by rolling hills and 156 farms, and it's in this countryside that the famous Bonarda wine is produced. Every Sunday in March, the town turns into a quaint yet thriving open-air market, where you can quaff a glass or two while enjoying parades, exhibitions and concerts.	
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				
28				
29				
30				
31				

PITTI TASTE

7-9 March

Florence

This annual food extravaganza is ten years old this year – and what's the best way to celebrate a birthday? By pigging out! Pitti Taste, held in the atmospheric Stazione Leopolda in Florence, gives you plenty of opportunities to do that, offering tastings, demonstrations and around 300 exhibitors from just about every region of Italy. More than 15,000 visitors attended last year's event, so you'd best get in quick before all the goodies are eaten up!

FESTA DELLA DONNA

8 March

Nationwide

International Women's Day falls on 8 March every year, and Italian men respectfully observe it with their own special celebration. In Italy, they call it the Festa della Donna (Festival of Women), and the day is characterised by chaps giving their ladies bunches of yellow mimosa flowers, carrying out all the household chores, cooking the dinner and then finishing up with a relaxing foot massage. Well, that's the theory, anyway.

HOBBY SHOW

13-15 March

Milan

Whether your favourite pastime is cake-making or crochet, sewing or stamp-collecting, you're sure to find something that will benefit you at this huge twice-yearly gathering in the Fiera Milano (Milan). The programme wasn't available at the time of going to press, but expect a wide variety of demonstrations, exhibitions and workshops. However, it's worth paying the entrance fee just for the opportunity to speak to like-minded individuals, who may be able to offer valuable tips and tricks.

Commemoration
of Julius Caesar's
death, Rome

Photograph © iStock

COMMEMORATION OF CAESAR'S DEATH

15 March
Rome

Love him or hate him, one thing is certain: Julius Caesar is the most famous of all Roman Generals, and a huge part of Rome's cultural heritage. Each year, the city marks the anniversary of his death in 44BC – when he was assassinated by a group of renegade politicians – by hosting a series of events in and around the Roman Forum, near Caesar's statue. Expect some fascinating history, as well as the odd fancy-dress costume.

FEAST DAY OF SAN GIUSEPPE

19 March
Nationwide

Well, we've already had a special day for the ladies (see the Festa della Donna), so just to make sure the men don't feel left out, here's the Italian Father's Day! Just as they do in England, children give presents to their dads, and *zeppole* (delicious, sweet pastries) are eaten in some households. Some towns and villages prefer to celebrate St Joseph in the traditional way, with bonfires and pageants – as long as we get some *zeppole*, we'll be happy.

FESTA DELLA PRIMAVERA

21 March
Nationwide

Primavera is the Italian word for springtime and, as everyone knows, spring symbolises new life. To celebrate this and what it means to local harvests, many towns and villages across Italy hold festivals and other events where homegrown food stuffs are showcased, exchanged and consumed (see regional press for further details). A couple of glasses of wine and a handful of fresh olives

later, you'll forget that winter ever happened.

PALIO DEI SOMARI

22 March

Torrita di Siena

If you ever took part in a donkey derby as a child, you'll love this quirky annual event. Back in 1966, tradesmen in the medieval town of Torrita di Siena in Tuscany decided they would celebrate the simplicity of their working lives by hosting a donkey race. Now, almost 50 years on, thousands come to witness the spectacle as the mules sometimes ignore their riders' instructions and even run in opposite directions! Only a brave person would bet on the winner.

MARATONA DI ROMA

22 March
Rome

The thought of taking part in a marathon sends shivers down our spine, but some people spend years optimising their fitness to meet the challenge, and watching them race against each other for athletic supremacy in the city of gladiators is an exhilarating and rewarding experience. The 26-mile route begins on the Via dei Fori Imperiali and takes in the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon and many more ancient sights. We're exhausted just thinking about it!

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

25 March
Florence

Nowhere is the arrival of spring celebrated more than in Florence. The Feast of the Annunciation begins with a colourful parade from the Palazzo Vecchio to Piazza SS Annunziata. Its arrival in the latter is greeted by hundreds of revellers, who celebrate the occasion with good wine, local produce and music from a variety of local artists. Many also pay a visit to the church of Santissima Annunziata, to see its beautiful mosaics and frescoes.

Please note that the dates of all events are subject to change. If you plan to attend, check events are going ahead before you travel. All attempts are made to present the correct details.

VIEWPOINT

The **region of Trentino** is famed for its winter sports rather than its wines, but what can you expect to drink to accompany dinner après ski? *Italia!* investigates the grapes that grow on the slopes in the summer...

The northern region of Trentino, which lies between Lombardy to the west and the Veneto to the east, is one better known for its skiing than its wines. Framed to the north by the mountains of the south Tyrol, its slopes are, nonetheless, coated in vines, and wine production is prolific. The best known wine – which even many wine buffs would not have heard of – is the Trentino DOC Nosiolo, a very delicate white wine

made from the Nosiolo grape variety that thrives on the slopes Valle dei Laghi and Val di Cembra. Some of the best grapes are kept back, dried and used to make a version of Vin Santo, the sweet dessert wine most associated with Tuscany, though Trentino Vin Santo does have its own DOC. Red wines are rare, though do look out for the young, fruity Trentino DOC Marzemino next time you go skiing in the region!





LEP Law provides comprehensive legal advice to
UK based clients with interests in Italy

Our legal services

- Real Estate acquisitions in Italy • UK and Italian inheritance rules, Italian and International wills, inheritance disputes in Italy • Contractual law and legal assistance with contractual disputes
- Credit recovery • Translation of legal documents

LEP Law are experts in navigating the complexities between the Italian and English legal systems and guiding you through it seamlessly

☎ +44 (0)20 7193 0290

enquiries@leplaw.co.uk

www.leplaw.co.uk



Victory House, 99-101 Regent Street, London W1B 4EZ

ITALIA!

www.italytravelandlife.com

Anthem Publishing Ltd, Suite 6, Piccadilly House,
London Road, Bath BA1 6PL

☎ +44 (0) 1225 489989 (advertising)

Fax +44 (0) 1225 489980

italia@anthem-publishing.com

EDITOR Paul Pettengale

paul.pettengale@anthem-publishing.com

☎ 07827 927 034

ART EDITOR Sam Grover

SUB EDITOR Jon Palmer

jon.palmer@anthem-publishing.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Sebastian Cresswell-Turner, Robin Crews, Paul Dimery, Joe Gartman,
Jan Hunt, Fleur Kinson, Freya Middleton, Adrian Mourby, Jane Smith

ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE Laura McLean

laura.mclean@anthem-publishing.com

☎ +44 (0)1225 489989

MARKETING MANAGER Alex Godfrey

alex.godfrey@anthem-publishing.com

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Simon Lewis

simon.lewis@anthem-publishing.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR Jon Bickley

jon.bickley@anthem-publishing.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

☎ 0844 322 1254/+44 (0) 1795 592848

italia@servicehelpline.co.uk

Price (12 issues) £42 UK basic annual rate

MAPS Netmaps www.digitalmaps.co.uk

PRINT Polestar UK Print Ltd

☎ +44 (0) 1206 849500

DISTRIBUTION Marketforce (UK) Ltd,
Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London SE1 0SU

☎ +44 (0) 20 3148 3300

LICENSING ENQUIRIES Jon Bickley

jon.bickley@anthem-publishing.com

☎ +44 (0) 1225 489984

Ecco la Cucina

Culinary Tours in the Heart of Tuscany



Small group culinary tours including hands-on cooking classes, winery tours and tastings, markets and visits to artisan food producers will immerse you in the splendor of Italian cuisine. Offering classes and tours in Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, Campania and Puglia.

Ecco La Cucina Mary Stipo Potter ☎ 001-321-412-2011

www.eccolacucina.com

mary@goitalyhomes.com

See what they're saying about us on Trip Advisor!

TEXTING ITALIA! TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By texting *Italia!* magazine you are agreeing to receive details of future offers and promotions from Anthem Publishing Ltd and related third parties. If you do not want to receive this information please text the words 'NO INFO' at the end of your message. Texts will be charged at the specified price plus one message at your standard network tariff rate.

PRIZE DRAW TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By entering our prize draws you are bound by these rules. The winners will be drawn at random from all entries that answer correctly before the closing date. The prize draw will take place after the closing date and the winners will be notified within 28 days of the draw. Only UK residents aged 18 and over may enter. No employees of Anthem Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this prize draw, or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise are available. Anthem Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Anthem Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. All entries must be received by the closing date. One entry per person. No purchase necessary. Copies of winners' list are available by written request from Anthem Publishing, Suite 6, Piccadilly House, London Road, Bath BA1 6PL.



All content copyright Anthem Publishing Ltd, 2015, all rights reserved. While we make every effort to ensure that the factual content of *Italia!* is correct we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or resold without the prior consent of Anthem Publishing Ltd. Anthem Publishing recognises all copyrights contained within this issue. Where possible we acknowledge the copyright holder.

LETTERS TO ITALIA!

Share your Italian experiences with us by sending your photos and letters to italia@anthem-publishing.com – you'll receive a gourmet gift voucher if you're chosen as our Letter of the Month winner...



Santa Maria Novella kept Catherine busy enough to miss the Medici Chapels

SECRET CALABRIA

We have a home in Calabria, near Paola. We have glorious sea views with the mountains behind. It is still unspoiled so prices are great. The people are welcoming and the restaurants are fantastic. Direct flights on Ryanair are frequent and cheap. So I don't understand why you never have any articles or publicity about this beautiful area. It is great value for money but money can't buy its tranquility, atmosphere, history or the genuine welcome given to visitors. You could open it up to a whole new generation! On second thoughts... Maybe we'll just keep it to ourselves!

Lisa Baker, via email

MONTH LETTER OF THE
MAR 2015



Our letter of the month (when based in the UK) will win a £25 voucher to spend at www.delicibo.com, recently launched to complement the Chesterfield-based Calabria Cucina & Delicibo Deli. delicibo.com provides a wide range of artisan Italian food and drink items for your enjoyment at home.

delicibo
DELICIOUS ITALIAN FOOD

MISSING THE MEDICI CHAPELS

I really enjoyed February's issue of *Italia!*. Recently visited Mantua and Brescia, albeit for a day in each. Highly recommend both venues. The Medici Chapels (Florence) were on my list for last May after listening to a talk about the Medici at our local Italian Society, but by the time we had exhausted Santa Maria Novella, Florence's first basilica (a church we had always scuttled past to arrive in the centre), we had to move on to Lucca, but a surprise awaited there in the form of the Mille Miglia! There'll be a next time, I hope.

Catherine Crehan, via email

A NEW READER WRITES

My husband and I were given a subscription to *Italia!* magazine for Christmas and think it's just brilliant. As part of our gift we were given your December issue and I was so surprised by the criticisms in some of the Readers' Letters and just wanted to let you know what a great job we think you have done on the magazine – we are really looking forward to our next copy landing on the doormat. All the best for 2015!

Caroline Gray, via iPhone

DIGITAL VERSIONS OF *ITALIA!* MAGAZINE FOR SUBSCRIBERS

May I wish you and all my fellow italophiles *buon anno!* I am about to subscribe for another year; this will be my tenth year. I wanted to suggest that it would be very useful to offer a free digital copy with all print subscriptions. This would be useful when travelling, etc. Currently I tend to scan any relevant issues beforehand. I prefer the printed copies to collect and read at home but a digital copy is far more useful when in the *bel paese*.

Roddy Dyce, Edinburgh

SEBASTIAN'S RIGHT TO REPLY

I reply to the criticisms of the *Gazzetta Italia!* column which appeared on the letters page of the January edition. The column is not, primarily, a linguistic or academic exercise. Its purpose is to inform and to

entertain, in a light-hearted spirit; and the Editor is therefore happy for a single person, competent in both languages, to write both sides of the column. After all, Luigi Barzini wrote his best-selling *The Italians* in English, which was not his mother tongue, and even he made a few mistakes. Otherwise, whilst I am the first to admit that my Italian is not entirely faultless, it is nevertheless more than usually fluent, and I reject the suggestion that it is (I quote) "unnatural", "awkward" and "clumsy". Indeed, I recently received an email from an Italian reader who said that I write Italian (I quote again) "much better than many Italians do".

Sebastian Cresswell-Turner

YOU TELL US!

We love receiving your letters, photos, questions and recommendations! Write to us today...

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

TEXT

Text your thoughts about Italy and *Italia!* magazine to us. Text the word **ITALIA** plus your message to 87474. (Texts cost 25p plus your standard network rate. For full terms and conditions see page 6.)

WRITE

Send post to us at *Italia!* magazine, Anthem Publishing, Suite 6, Piccadilly House, London Road, Bath BA1 6PL

EMAIL

Write to us at italia@anthem-publishing.com

FACEBOOK

Keep up with *Italia!* on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com then search for 'Italia magazine' and click on 'Like' to join us.

TWITTER

Go to www.italytravelandlife.com and follow the Twitter link to keep up with tweets from 'Italiomag'. See you there!



Homes for Fractional Ownership

Looking to own a seven-figure property on a five-figure budget? Fractional ownership could be the answer. **Fleur Kinson** explains this increasingly popular way to buy luxury property in Italy...

These days, we're all looking for ways to save money. But naturally we still want the finer things in life if we can get them. For many of us, a really luxurious holiday home in Italy is a fond dream – something we imagine we couldn't possibly afford. But where there's a will there's a way. And 'fractional ownership' might just be that way.

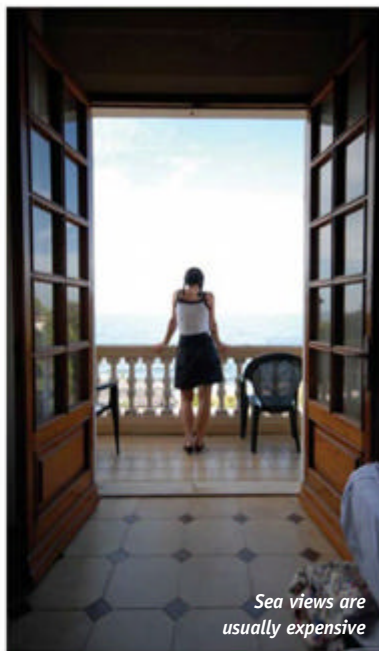
Fractional ownership is a concept devised a couple of decades ago in America (and can be seen as a clever 'can-have' extension of that nation's general 'can-do' attitude). The system was designed specifically to allow economical access to high-end products such as private jets, yachts, and luxury homes abroad. Over recent years, it has really been taking off in Italy – especially in highly-regarded regions such as Tuscany and Le Marche. Understandably, the recent recession and its ongoing effects have only increased levels of interest in this affordable way to enjoy a home in Italy. So if you haven't heard of this novel purchasing method before, it's time you knew more.

IT'S NOT TIMESHARE

One thing to make clear right away is that fractional ownership is completely distinct from 'timeshare' – a concept that's usually greeted with justifiable suspicion. Buying

into a timeshare property merely gives you the right to spend an allocated amount of time in it every year for a certain number of years. (Which hardly seems to offer much advantage over renting a holiday property in the conventional way.) Fractional ownership is different, because you actually own a share of the property itself. Your name is on the title deeds, along with the other co-owners. As the property appreciates in value, so does your share. And you can sell your share, leave it in a will, transfer it or place it in a trust any time you like – just as with conventional property ownership. An owned fraction remains a valuable, saleable asset.

Fractional ownership and the timeshare system are similar only in that your access to the property is limited to a particular number of weeks every year. With fractional ownership properties, that's usually about four to six weeks, spread across different seasons of the year. Not coincidentally, four to six weeks is the average amount of time that a conventional buyer actually spends at his or her fully-owned holiday home in Italy. So in theory, and in practice, you get to enjoy the same amount of usage you would have if you owned a property in its entirety. But with fractional ownership that property will be a far larger and more luxurious home than you could probably ever afford outright. ➤



Photography © iStock



*That Tuscan farmhouse
could be yours after all...*



CASA TRE ARCHI – MEDIEVAL TOWN

Type of property Fractional Ownership Townhouse

Number of bedrooms 3

Price 5 weeks annual ownership from just £65,000

Location Sibylline Mountains

Contact Appassionata Ltd ifh@appassionata.com

+39 3315 413225 www.appassionata.com

Immerse yourself in traditional Italian life in the beautiful medieval town of Petritoli. Appassionata are delighted to announce the launch of their new fractional property, a 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom townhouse built into one of the ancient turrets which form the entrance to the town. Spacious indoor and outdoor living, including a 50sqm roof terrace with distant sea views and of surrounding hilltop towns and countryside. Petritoli is a lively town, with excellent bars, restaurants and shops, all within walking distance. Just a 20-minute drive to the nearest blue flag beach, 45 minutes to the Sibillini mountains and national park, this property is ideally located.



Houses will be looked after in your absence

A great boon is that you are never paying for the time that you're not at your property – unlike with a conventionally-owned home.

HOW IT WORKS

The legal framework underpinning the fractional ownership system is

But, you're asking, which weeks of the year would I get? In most fractional ownership schemes, a rotating calendar gives you a different selection of weeks each year. Every owner is allocated an equal number of peak-season and off-peak weeks. So let's say you

Obviously you can buy more than one share if you want to enjoy even more time at your home

as follows: the developer establishes the property as a company and the buyers buy shares – or 'fractions' – of that company. As with all property, ownership is defined by the title deed, which in this case is divided into fractions which carry your name and the names of all the other owners of your property.

These fractions will commonly range in size from one quarter to one twelfth, giving you the right to spend the corresponding fraction of the year at the property. A one-tenth fraction might be typical on an Italian property, which would entitle you to five weeks there per year. (Note that two weeks of the year on such a property would be devoted to maintenance work, with no owners visiting at that time. And yes, the fact that all repairs and maintenance work are done for you is another advantage of buying into a fractional ownership property.) Obviously, you can buy more than one share if you want to enjoy even more time at your home.

have five weeks a year; two of those will always be in the summer and three in other seasons. In practice, the system isn't quite as rigid as it sounds. All the owners in a fractional scheme are free to discuss the possibility of swapping weeks

Most fractional ownership properties will be substantial



if they want to, and work it all out between themselves.

Be aware that there's also the exciting additional possibility of joining an owners' network scheme and swapping your property weeks with owners of fractional properties elsewhere in the world – all of similar quality. You go to stay at their home while they come to stay at yours. Many owners travel the world staying in assorted luxury homes this way. Others, meanwhile, like their property too much to want to go anywhere else.

MANY PLUSES

Asked to sum up the advantages of fractional ownership, John Dillon of RealPointItaly says "You get affordable ownership of some of the best properties in Italy, but at a fraction of the price and without the headaches of full ownership. It's the perfect alternative to a 'lock-up-and-go' home. The property will be operated by a management company, providing peace of mind and creating the sense that you actually own the whole property whenever you stay. Plus, of course, you aren't even tied to a single property, but enjoy access to an exchange network which means you can stay in similar high-quality homes worldwide."

Obviously, fractional ownership offers certain advantages over merely renting a holiday property when you want to spend some recreational time abroad. Any rent you pay ➤

Anna and Jerry Daunton own a share in this Tuscan property



OUR ITALIAN HOME

Massachusetts-based Anna and Jerry Daunton own a one-tenth share of a very large farmhouse-villa in central Tuscany. They enjoy two weeks at the property every summer and three weeks there at other times of the year.

What drew them to Italy, and to fractional ownership in particular? "We actually met in Italy!" Anna exclaims happily. "This was many, many years ago, when we were both students. I was on a study year abroad, and Jerry was taking his first European vacation, travelling down through Italy with a college buddy. We met at a bar in Florence, and got married two years later. So as you can imagine, Italy has always been special to us!"

"About 15 years ago we bought into a residence club in Aspen, Colorado. 'Residence clubs' is the name we Americans use for what you Brits call fractional ownership. The system worked really well for us, and we especially liked being able to stay at other great properties in different resorts when we wanted to. We did exchanges with homes in the Caribbean and lots of other beautiful places.

"A few years ago, we discovered that there were residence clubs or fractional ownership schemes starting up in Italy, and we decided to sell our share of the Aspen place and buy into one of them instead. We very nearly went for a gorgeous old *palazzo* in Florence – because after all, that was the city that had brought us together – but the lure of the Italian countryside was too strong and in the end we bought a share of this wonderful villa.

"It's the perfect mix of a private house and a hotel. When we arrive, everything is clean and laundered, the refrigerator is full of goodies, and we can instantly relax and enjoy ourselves. There's a concierge service we can call on at any time, and sometimes we book the chef to cook for us. It all seems intensely luxurious, and makes our vacations feel perfect. I've noticed that we haven't been exchanging with any other properties in other places ever since we got the villa in Italy!"

"I would recommend residence clubs or fractional ownership schemes to anyone thinking about buying a home in Italy. Make sure you read all the details of how each one operates, and pay special attention to how the calendar of weeks works – how flexible is it and how you can swap with other owners if you want to. Ask lots of questions and get a lawyer to read through the details to make sure you know what's what. We're totally happy with our villa and the management company who run it. The place is always in great condition and we just love it here."





BORGIO DI VAGLI

Type of property **Hamlet**

Number of bedrooms **1-2**

Price **€78,100-€124,000** (85 per cent sold out)

Location **Tuscany**

Contact **Club Borgo di Vagli**

☎ **+39 0575 61961** www.clubborgodivagli.com

Nestled deep in the rolling hills of Tuscany with dramatic views of the 1,000-year-old Pierle Castle and surrounding olive groves, fruit trees and ancient oaks, Borgo di Vagli is an award-winning fully restored 14th-century Tuscan hamlet available for fractional ownership. Borgo di Vagli is a private, member-owned community. Title to the residences is held by an independent trust company for the benefit of the club owners. Similar to other real estate, ownership may be sold, willed, transferred or placed in a trust at any time. Unlike timeshare, which typically offers the right to use of a specific week and unit, Borgo di Vagli owners enjoy, instead, unlimited and flexible access to the residence. It is designed to be a sensible alternative to second-home ownership and is an investment for life, both from a lifestyle and financial perspective. If you dream of experiencing life in a traditional Tuscan hamlet – consisting of intimate one and two-bedroom homes – then this is a great opportunity. The ten-year restoration project was conceived and executed by the renowned architect Fulvio Di Rosa. Fulvio is often cited by author Frances Mayes as being among the best in his field. His meticulous restoration efforts have allowed Borgo di Vagli to maintain its original feel, atmosphere and charm, without compromising modern-day comforts such as fully-equipped kitchens and cosy bathrooms. Fulvio is also responsible for the interiors and his attention to detail is sublime. The property is furnished with rural Tuscan antiques, handcrafted crockery, Busatti linens, satellite television and comes with wi-fi throughout. Amenities include a reception, concierge service, a large outdoor heated swimming pool, trattoria and endless hiking/walking paths among one of Tuscany's most splendid and peaceful landscapes. (See 'Restoring Borgo di Vagli', following page.)



Normally, having a swimming pool in a holiday home would be a liability

on a holiday home is money you'll never see again, while a share of a fractional-owned property remains a saleable asset. But there are other readily obvious pluses to having a fixed Italian abode. You will know where everything is and how everything works. You can store some personal effects there permanently. Through repeat visits, you become intimately familiar with the area and the local people; you start to become part of the community and have a life in Italy, just as you would if you were a full-owner of a home in Italy.

knowing that everything will be taken care of in their absence."

BUT IS IT FOR YOU?

Like everything that has many apparent advantages, fractional ownership doesn't suit everyone. Having set periods allocated for visiting your property is probably the biggest potential drawback. If you want total flexibility in when you can turn up at your house, if you hate planning ahead and like to take spontaneous, last-minute holidays, you may well find the system too restrictive. If, however, you're happy

Owners can arrive and immediately relax – the beds are made, the pool and garden immaculate

You also get more comfort and less work. Most fractional-ownership properties come with weekly cleaning and the fresh stocking of fridges and cupboards for your arrival, among other services. Dawn Cavanagh-Hobbs of Le Marche fractional specialists Appassionata says, "Our owners can arrive at their property and immediately relax; the beds are made, clean towels laid out, the pool and garden immaculate. They don't need to spend any time cleaning, weeding or painting. And then when they leave, they only have to lock the door and drive away,

to plan well in advance in exchange for all the other advantages of the system, you'll be fine.

But maybe your true Italian property dream is to lovingly restore an old tumbledown farmhouse, precisely according to your own taste and specifications. Obviously, in that case, fractional ownership isn't for you. A fractionally-owned home comes fully furnished and ready to inhabit. You won't be able to make structural or design changes. However, if what you really want is just a home with character and history, and you don't feel the ➤

A luxury lifestyle investment with Appassionata



Offering affordable shares in unique properties in the quintessentially Italian region of Le Marche.

The smart way to own a luxury home and vineyard in Italy for a fraction of the cost.

*Please visit our website or call for more information
0039 3315413225*



www.appassionata.com

NOW IS THE TIME TO OWN A UNIQUE PIECE OF TUSCANY'S HISTORY, BEAUTY AND SERENITY.

A 14th-century restored medieval hamlet. A serene, spectacular country setting just 20 minutes from the piazzas, restaurants and galleries of Cortona. A private residential club like no other.

Borgo Di Vagli is a one of a kind, secluded sanctuary in the heart of Tuscany. With furnished residences, modern amenities and in-house services, this 600-year old enclave is alive again, and ready to welcome you home.

Learn more or schedule an amazing Discovery Visit at TuscanBorgoDV.com



Borgo di Vagli

Tuscany's No.1 Fractional Ownership Club



RESTORING BORGIO DI VAGLI

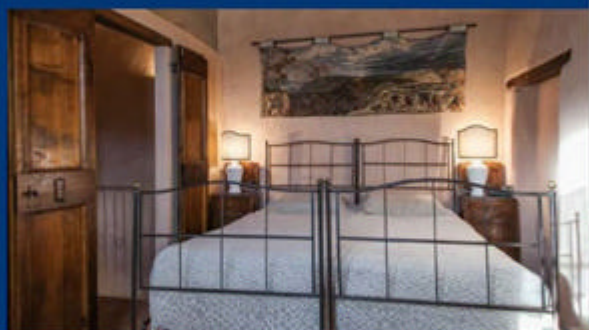
Borgio di Vagli was certainly one of the most challenging and intriguing “restoration” projects during my 30 year career, says **Fulvio Di Rosa**, Restoration Architect

“My goal in each restoration project has been essentially to preserve the spirit and soul of each of the buildings/ruins, as the philosophy behind my work is based on the respect for the projects and their immense historical and cultural value. Ultimately, I am passionate about Tuscany and about preserving its beauty, culture, lifestyle, architecture and heritage.

Throughout my career, I have always acted as the Architect and the Developer; these separate but entwined roles assist the philosophy of my work and welcome owners who share my feelings and emotions towards the project: people who were genuinely looking for an authentic piece of Tuscany and not just a copy of it! This principle served me well throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s but as the supply of “unique” ruins became scarce the purchase prices became prohibitive to a developer. Towards the end of the ‘90s, I came to terms that the purchase price of ruins, skilled labour costs and quality raw materials had increased to the extent that outright ownership, for most, was no longer a prudent financial option for a historic rural home in Tuscany, except as permanent residents.

Using the Fractional Ownership concept for Borgo di Vagli was a logical and easy decision, as it offered a growing number of passionate Italophiles an affordable way to own a home in Tuscany but without the huge financial investment and maintenance hassles/responsibilities that are generally associated with home ownership overseas.

As we approach sell-out, I get enormous satisfaction when I join our owners and their families for pizza in the *trattoria* for dinner and hear them share their stories with other families from all over the world. I take great pleasure to see how the project and my philosophical message is being enjoyed by different generations.”



You will be able to holiday in exclusive areas that would cost a fortune to rent in

need to reconstruct a tumbledown one of these yourself, then fractional ownership remains a good option for you. Fractional Ownership properties are almost invariably stately old piles with a noble rustic lineage. They will have no shortage of character or history.

An indisputable restriction to fractional ownership is variety of location. Almost all Fractional Ownership schemes in Italy are currently on properties in the high-prestige regions of Tuscany, Umbria and Le Marche. These regions are popular for a reason, and we don't

Properties are almost invariably stately old piles with a noble rustic lineage

Perhaps you long for exclusivity. If you want to feel that a house is wholly yours, then fractional ownership clearly isn't a route to pursue. You need to be emotionally comfortable with the fact that other people have a share in your much-loved Italian home and are going to be enjoying it when you're not there.

Of course, many full owners rent their Italian home to holidaymakers, so even *they* aren't enjoying total exclusivity. While the vast majority of holiday rental clients in Italy are a discerning and highly considerate bunch, it isn't inconceivable that co-owners are likely to treat all the fittings and furniture of a home even more carefully than here-today-gone-tomorrow rental clients. So your fractionally-owned home might remain in even better condition inside than a fully-owned home rented to short-term clients.

need to detail here the sighingly lyrical charm of their respective landscapes, architecture, art, cuisine, culture, lifestyle and climate. But if you're powerfully drawn to Italy's exotic far south, or its beautiful, sophisticated north, you're unlikely to find that fractional ownership is an option in these places.

All considered, if none of the above seem like significant obstacles to you, fractional ownership is definitely an option you should consider. It can be a very clever way of getting yourself a truly wonderful home in Italy, for a fraction of its full cost. ■

USEFUL CONTACTS

www.appassionata.com
www.clubborgodivagli.com
www.realpointitaly.com

Reloved

Your creative guide to upcycling

3 ISSUES FOR £5*

Reloved is the magazine for everyone who enjoys **crafting with an upcycling twist**. With an emphasis on breathing new life into old, forgotten objects, it brings a hands-on approach to this thriving pastime. Featuring at least **25 substantial projects** each issue, this is the magazine for you if you enjoy creating and adapting beautiful things. **Subscribe today and try your first 3 issues for £5.**



SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT

www.subscribeonline.co.uk/reloved

Or call us on ☎ 0844 848 8425

(readers outside the UK should call ☎ +44 (0)1795 419 854)

*3 issues for £5 is available to UK Direct Debit orders only. After your trial period your subscription will continue at £19 every 6 issues (saving 33%) until you choose to cancel. If you cancel within 2 weeks of receiving the 2nd issue, you will pay no more than £5. Offer ends 31 December 2015.

Quote code
ITALIA15

Subscribe to 3 issues for £9.99

**FOOD
HEAVEN**



YOUR FANTASTIC SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Packed with all the sweet baking inspiration you could possibly need, the Food Heaven series includes Britain's best-selling baking magazines *Cupcake Heaven*, *Baking Heaven* and *Cake Decoration Heaven*. By subscribing you will:

- Receive a different Food Heaven title every month
- Save 33% on the shop price* ● Pay just £9.99 every 3 issues*
- FREE UK delivery direct to your door

2 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE



CALL US ON
0844 848 8423

(overseas readers please call +44 (0) 1795 592 898)
quote code ITALIA15



ORDER ONLINE AT
anthem.subscribeonline.co.uk/foodheaven
enter code ITALIA15

*Offer available to UK Direct Debit orders only. Your subscription will start with the next available issue

GAZZETTA ITALIA!

The idea of there being dark, secret explanations for some of life's more unusual events is as old as history itself. And the Italians, says **Sebastian Cresswell-Turner**, love a good plot...

La dietrologia

Gli italiani sono un popolo avvincente ed intelligente. Ma negli anni durante i quali abitavo a Roma, mi chiedevo ogni tanto se non fossero anche eccessivamente intelligenti. Le loro menti sono tanto sveglie e tanto agili, che spesso cercheranno complicazioni laddove non ce ne sono, e per un problema per il quale la soluzione è semplice quant'è ovvia, scoveranno la spiegazione la più improbabile in assoluto. Mi riferisco alla mania italiana per la dietrologia, ossia il desiderio di vedere da ogni parte complotti strani e sinistri dietro la realtà quotidiana che crediamo di conoscere.

Ad esempio, mi ricordo una cena a Roma quando uno dei nostri insistè che il Cristo non fosse mai esistito – un'affermazione impressionante alla quale la metà di quelli presenti davano volentieri il loro assenso. “È stato inventato dai primi papi,” disse l'ospite, possessore di un diploma universitario. “Avevano bisogno di una tale figura per giustificare il loro potere,” proseguì. “E in che modo hanno creato la legenda? È tutto documentato, nella parte più segreta degli archivi segreti del Vaticano; la parte alla quale ha accesso solo il Papa stesso.”

Per un nordico ottuso e prosaico come me, si trattava di un'esagerazione francamente eccessiva, e in seguito telefonai ad un amico al Vaticano, il quale mi assicurò che Gesù viene menzionato da Tacito e anche da Flavio Giuseppe, tutti e due commentatori contemporanei. Ma il miscredente non fu convinto e mi spiegò che i documenti nei quali il Redentore viene menzionato sono falsi. Ovviamente.

Poi mi abituai, man mano, a sentir dire che le atrocità terroristiche delle Brigate Rosse negli anni settanta erano, in realtà, opera del Governo italiano. E più tardi, quando mi recai da un avvocato per discutere di uno che mandava criminali violenti alla mia residenza nella speranza che poi me ne sarei andato, il legale si rifiutò di credere che l'unico indiziato fosse anche il mandante. No! Sarebbe stato troppo semplice. Si trattava sicuramente di un'altra persona.

Vabbene, si potrebbe dire. Che importanza ha? Ma qui dobbiamo stare attenti. Perché quando butti fuori dalla finestra tutti i principi del buon senso, e quando la più palese assurdità diventa non solo possibile ma anche probabile, si è entrati nella terra della paranoia; e lì, cari amici, si è persi.

Conspiracy theories

The Italians are a charming and intelligent people. However, during the years I lived in Rome I sometimes found myself wondering whether they were not too intelligent for their own good. Their minds are so quick and so agile that they will often look for complications where they do not exist, and they will seek out the most far-fetched explanation for some problem to which the simple answer is staring them in the face. I allude to the Italian mania for conspiracy theories, or for *dietrologia*, as they call it. This word means, literally, 'behind-ology', and refers to the desire to believe that at every turn, strange and sinister plots lie behind the reality we think we know.

For example, I remember a dinner party in Rome at which one of those present insisted that Jesus Christ never existed – a startling assertion that had half the table nodding their heads in assent. “He was invented by the first Popes,” continued the university-educated guest. “They needed him to justify their power. And there's a record of how they created the legend, too. It's all there in the most secret part of the secret archives of the Vatican, the part that only the Pope has access to ...”

This was too much for a dull and unimaginative northerner such as myself, so I later rang a friend at the Vatican who assured me that Jesus is mentioned by Tacitus and also by Flavius Josephus, both roughly contemporary commentators. But the unbeliever was unconvinced. The documents in which Our Saviour is mentioned were forgeries, came the answer. Obviously.

After a while, I also became used to hearing that the terrorist atrocities carried out by the Red Brigades in the 1970s had in fact been masterminded by the Italian government. And when I consulted a lawyer about a criminal who was sending thugs round to my flat to scare me into leaving, he refused to believe that the only possible suspect was indeed the perpetrator. That would have been too simple. There had to be someone else.

All of which might sound harmless enough. But beware. Because when you throw the laws of common sense out of the window, and when the most obvious absurdity becomes not only possible but even probable, you have entered the land of paranoia; and there, you are lost.



THE AUTHOR

SEBASTIAN CRESSWELL-TURNER is a freelance writer, translator and fluent Italian speaker who lived in Rome for many years. His travel articles have appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Times* and *The Mail*, and many more.





A DAY TRIP TO ISCHIA

Any visit to Naples is enhanced by a trip to the islands. **Robin Crews**
finds that it's easy to hop over the water to Ischia...



Clockwise from top left: Colourful houses on Procida; Spiaggia degli Inglesi on Ischia; the Castello Aragonese; cats enjoying the shade of a Naples café

We all know that passion runs through the veins of Italians right throughout the peninsula, but in the Mezzogiorno there is something else coursing through the locals' bodies.

As you travel south things clearly heat up, but it's not just the temperature that tips the mercury. Volumes increase on the roads and in conversations; the chilli count on the menu goes up; and the pervading smell of sulphur indicates that hot rock also bubbles just beneath the surface of southern Italy.

The heat and fervour of the area is evidenced in your first contact with the people of Naples. Inhabitants of the city's *centro storico* live with the ever-present possibility that today may be their last day on earth. Half of Naples sits on top of the Campi Flegrei, a huge area of unstable volcanic activity which in recent years has been showing worrying signs of a violent awakening.

Given the precarious nature of their existence, it's perhaps understandable that the people seem

to go out of their way to enjoy every moment of their days.

In the company of a gregarious Neapolitan driver, even the taxi transfer from Naples Capodichino Airport is an experience. Yes, you need to make sure you don't get ripped off – an extra €15 on top of the regular fare seems to be the going rate – but your transfer is the perfect introduction to this mind-boggling city.

The problems of civic investment, or lack of it, and their effect on the city's infrastructure is well known. It looks like locals regularly nip out to purloin bits of road to repair their houses. Huge gaps in the cobbles loom, but drivers seem oblivious to the axel-ruining craters and think "if I go really fast, my car will leap over that". If you're lucky, your driver will speak no English at all: his Italian conveys the excitement of the city in a way that English never can.

Once he discovered we were taking the ferry to Ischia, our driver took out his phone to look for photos of his summer trip to the island, and to show us some snaps of him swimming in the *azzurro* sea. "Look", he said passing his phone over his

shoulder while swerving across the road. "You can see me with my daughters on my shoulders. Ah, Ischia, *la bella isola!*"

LA BELLA ISOLA

Dropping us at Naples' Molo Beverello passenger port, the boat is the only way to arrive on Ischia. You can take the sprightly but functional *aliscafo* (hydrofoil), or the slightly plodding but somehow more satisfying *traghetto* (ferry).

As you approach the island, the smell of *gamberi all'aglio* floats from restaurants lining the harbour of the small but perfectly-formed Ischia Porto.

The town will be many travellers' first view of the island, though you can also disembark at Casamicciola or Forio. Ischia Porto stretches along a ribbon of pretty coastline and its low-rise hotels, restaurants with sea views, and beach clubs make this a good base for a relaxing stay.

The town has good transport links with the rest of the island, with relatively regular, though slightly creaking, bus services to all points. It's worth hopping on the public bus to follow the circular road around



the island to take in the staggering coastal views.

Ischia is a relatively small island – less than 50 square kilometres – but punches well above its weight in must-see sights. Good for at least a five-day visit, the island has many points of interest on each of its craggy corners. Its centre – dominated by the 2,600ft Mount Epomeo which looms large over the whole island – has plenty to offer the more energetic visitor. A thigh-busting cycle or walk it may be, but your considerable efforts to reach the top are rewarded with views that seem to have been made in heaven, rather than forged in the bowels of the earth.

Back in the main town of Ischia Porto, all roads lead from the bustling harbour through the palm-lined and mainly pedestrianised town towards the unmissable Castello Aragonese. Despite the mosquito buzz of the odd scooter and small delivery van, the quiet roads leading to the island's main sight are a refreshing change from the freneticism of Naples. Passing through streets of independent gift shops, cafés and churches, the buildings gradually become older and

more picturesque the closer you get to the castle.

A mile or so from the harbour, the coastline opens out onto a narrow promontory leading to the imposing rock that is home to castle, monastery, churches and, these days, an impressive hotel.

Inhabited since the 5th century BC, this 'island within an island' is a great igneous rock which sits like St Michael's Mount at the end of a narrow causeway that locals use as a platform to dive into the deep, warm waters.

Because of the various invasions and threats from pirates throughout the centuries, the castle used to be home to almost every inhabitant on the island. I can imagine the security the rock brought as we walk along the short tunnel under the mountain towards the lift to take us up to the main part of the mount. Plan for at least two hours of happy wandering as you'll want to take your time climbing the steep steps to reach the views, which get progressively better as you climb.

Castello Aragonese isn't the only rock to be reached by a causeway on the island. Sant Angelo on

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

ESPRESSO TOUR

www.ischia.it/en/how-to-get-ischia/bus-timetables-and-routes

For the price of an espresso, buy a bus ticket for one of Ischia's circuitous bus routes. For €1.90, lines CS (sinistra heading anti-clockwise), CD (destra heading clockwise) and line 1 take you on the coastal road hanging astoundingly onto the vertiginous cliffs which plunge to meet the foaming sea.

RELAX AT THE SPA

*Via Nuova Montevico, 26
80076 Lacco Ameno,
Isola d'Ischia*

☎ +39 081 994 033

info@sanmontano.com

www.sanmontano.com

At Lacco Ameno on Ischia, the San Montano Resort and Spa sits on top of a hill with stunning views over the town, beach and sea. The hotel has two outdoor pools, with waterfall and whirlpool, beauty treatments and spa packages.

THE LOST COLOSSEUM

Via Nicola Terracciano, 75, Pozzuoli

☎ +39 848 800 288

The Flavian Amphitheatre in Pozzuoli is remarkably well-preserved and is the third largest amphitheatre in Italy. Located on the middle of a busy roundabout, you can combine a visit with a trek up the hill to experience the Solfatara volcano.

AMAZING MARBLE

Via Francesco De Sanctis, 19/21

80134 Napoli

☎ +39 081 5518470

www.museosansevero.it/en

Hidden in an assuming Neapolitan street is the Capella Sansevero, a late 16th century church which houses some of the most moving sculptures you'll ever see. The Veiled Christ by Giuseppe Sanmartino is worth the trip to Naples alone, but this and its marble companions are complemented by 'anatomical models' of a man and woman whose skeletons and arteries are exposed and preserved by a mysterious chemical process.

GOING UNDERGROUND

Via Fontanelle, 80, Napoli

☎ +39 081 744 3714

www.napoliunplugged.com/location/fontanelle-cemetery-naples

The Fontanelle Cemetery is an eerie but peaceful underground cavern which is the final resting place of millions of poor Neapolitans. Struck down by plagues and epidemics, people who couldn't afford a burial have been laid to rest here since the 17th century.



WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL BELLINI

Via S.M. di Costantinopoli, 101, Napoli

☎ +39 081 451732

info@hotelpiazzabellini.com

www.hotelpiazzabellini.com

Set just off Piazza Bellini, this quiet hotel is built in a completely renovated *palazzo*. It has its own courtyard and rooms with views over the Bay of Naples and Vesuvius.

HOTEL ROYAL CONTINENTAL

Via Partenope 38/44, Napoli

☎ +39 081 2452068

info@royalcontinental.it

www.royalgroup.it/royalcontinental

One of a number of luxury hotels on Naples seafont, the Royal Continental directly overlooks the Castel dell'Ovo, which sits on a small island in the sea.

HOTEL HERMITAGE AND PARK TERME

Via L.do Mazzella, 80, Ischia

☎ +39 081 984 242

hermitage@fabahotels.it

www.hermitageischia.it

A good base to explore the island, Hotel Hermitage is a mile from Ischia Porto, and is a spa resort with easy access to the town with its wide range of restaurants and shops. Ask for a room with a balcony and sea view, and you will overlook the beautiful Castello Aragonese.

Ischia's southern coast is another pretty holiday town with its own volcanically-produced landmark giving the weary traveller the chance to rest and cool off on lovely, clean beaches of its lower slopes.

From Sant Angelo's small harbour, you can take the five-minute water taxi to be dropped off right on the beach. Once we leapt from boat to soft sand, and staked our claim on the sparsely populated sunbeds, we noticed some of our fellow bathers covered in thick grey mud.

A word with one of the friendly beachside bar waitresses encouraged us to stroll to the western end of the beach to find a bath of volcanic springs and mud just waiting to be smothered all over our weary skin. We left Sant Angelo in the late afternoon with soft, conditioned skin as well as memories of a relaxing day at a special beach.

For visitors who base themselves around Ischia Porto and have less time on the island, beaches are easily accessible close to the town, though they are of the crowded, sunbed-choked variety so beloved in Italy.

For something much more secluded and serene, head to the

north of the harbour and down the narrow, pretty streets to the Spiaggia degli Inglesi. Although only 800 metres from the harbour's hubbub, the winding streets discourage mass visits, and you'll be sharing the dark sand with locals and the more well-informed traveller.

Ischia is known for its volcanic mud and thermal spas, and many hotels offer facilities to help you completely cast off your cares. You can find many such resorts around the town of Casamicciola, an hour's walk north of Ischia Porto. But for a touch of genteel charm, carry on through the town and head for Lacco Ameno, probably the most charming resort on the island.

It too hosts bubbling spa hotels, but if you're just looking for a small, relaxed restaurant to spend a few hours with a reasonably priced fish dish, head for a trattoria around the bizarre Il Fungo rock formation which sprouts incongruously from the quiet marina.

Another product of the island's volcanic activity, Il Fungo looks like a petrified chocolate muffin growing from the sea. This has left a gravity-defying mushroom as an unusual

Clockwise from top left: Ischia Porto; the Spanish Quarter in Naples; a stone doorway at Castello Aragonese



Plan for at least two hours of happy wandering as you'll want to take your time climbing the steep steps to reach the views

Ischia is known for its volcanic mud and thermal spas, and many hotels offer facilities to help you completely cast off your cares





landmark to gaze at while you're enjoying your *spaghetti alle vongole*.

THE MOUTH OF HELL

Leaving Ischia is as sad as it is joyous to arrive. We take the mid-morning ferry out of Ischia Porto heading to the mainland again, but this time our destination is Pozzuoli. A satellite town of Naples, in truth there's little to recommend Pozzuoli to visitors. This is despite the fact that it is home to the Roman 'Temple of Serapis' and the Flavian Amphitheatre – two sights which anywhere else in the world would probably make the town a bustling hub of tourism.

Both sights are worth wandering past on the way up the hill towards the town's sulphurous star – the mighty Solfatara volcano.

Pozzuoli is at the heart of the Campi Flegrei and the grumbling Solfatara is a 'dormant' volcano sitting a mile up the hill from the port. Yet it doesn't feel dormant, judging by the heat belching from the crater.

The entrance is unassuming enough. A gravel path takes you through a wooded area and it feels like a gentle nature ramble, albeit with

a curious eggy tinge on the wind. Then the path goes up an incline and you look to your left to see that you are walking up the inside of a perfect crater. With a quarter mile radius, you look across the quarry-like cap of the volcano, with steam creeping up crater walls and blocks of flats perched on the crater's lip! The residents of these precarious homes clearly have bravery or faith beyond reason.

Walking across the cap of the volcano is a bizarre experience. Pick up a great pumice rock, which weighs far less than you'd expect, and drop it on the ground. You'll hear the unnerving sound of hollow ground beneath your feet. As the steam rising from the small fissures underfoot indicates the incredible temperatures beneath, you tread especially lightly across the crater to get a closer view of the bigger cracks in the earth which belch noxious gases and amazing heat.

The Victorians thought that these unpleasant fumes were beneficial and built a series of brick sweat boxes so they could take the vapours. The boxes are still there if you're brave enough to crouch inside to see whether you can stand the heat.

As an aside, the Solfatara site also hosts what's got to be one of the most unusual campsites in the world. Sitting in a small wooded area that backs straight onto the volcanic cap, this campsite welcomes caravans, motorhomes and tents, and must be the only place in the world where you could potentially boil in your (sleeping) bag.

Back down the hill and on the train from Pozzuoli to Napoli Centrale, again right through the volcanic rock, and our trip has come full circle. See Naples and die? Well hopefully not until we can get back to this fiery land at least once more. ■

GETTING THERE

► Naples Capodichino Airport is about four miles from the historical centre, and is served by international carriers including BA, EasyJet, Meridiana, Monarch and Thomson flying from all over the UK. Aer Lingus provides a service from Dublin. Taxis to the city centre or the port should cost no more than €25.

► It costs €19 for the boat transfer from Naples Molo Beverello to Ischia (one way); €15 for Ischia to Pozzuoli.

Clockwise from far left: Vesuvius in the morning; Il Fungo rock in Lacco Ameno; crust on the Solfatara volcano; fumes from Solfatara

ITALIA! SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM ITP124

☐ **Yes! I would like to subscribe to *Italia!* magazine**

(Please complete the Direct Debit instructions below)

☐ **UK Direct Debit – £18.45 every 6 issues**

☐ **I would like to purchase a gift subscription**

(Please complete the form below)

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY DIRECT DEBIT



Originator's Identification Number

8 3 7 1 8 1

1 Name of your Bank or Building Society

2 Name of account holder(s)

3 Branch sort code

4 Account number

5 Instruction to your Bank/Building Society Please pay Anthem Publishing Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Anthem Publishing and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE

Direct Debit is only available in the UK. If you're not entirely satisfied with *Italia!* at any time during your subscription, you can cancel it and receive a refund for any unmailed copies

YOUR DETAILS

Title Forename Surname

Email address**

Address

Postcode

Country

Phone number

Mobile**

GIFT RECIPIENT'S DETAILS (if applicable)

Title Forename Surname

Address

Postcode

Country

OTHER PAYMENT METHODS

☐ **UK** 12 issues by credit/debit card or cheque for just **£36.95**

☐ **Europe** 12 issues by credit/debit card or cheque for just **£49.95**

☐ **World** 12 issues by credit/debit card or cheque for just **£59.95**

☐ **USA/Canada** 12 issues by credit/debit card or cheque for just **\$75**

Please debit my card

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro ☐ American Express

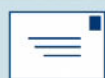
Card no

Valid from Expiry date Issue no

Signature(s)

Date

☐ **I enclose a cheque made payable to Anthem Publishing Ltd for £**



Send your completed form to **Anthem Publishing Ltd, Freeport RRB5-LRRG-CTBJ, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne ME9 8GU**

Offer ends **30 April 2015**

*Sorry, 30% saving is available for UK Direct Debit orders only. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. After your first 6 issues, your Direct Debit price will increase to £9.90 every 3 issues thereafter. You may cancel your subscription at any time.

**Please enter this information so that Anthem Publishing Ltd, publisher of *Italia!*, can keep you informed of newsletters, special offers and promotions via email or free text messages. You may unsubscribe from these messages at any time.

Anthem Publishing Ltd may contact you with details of our products and services or to undertake research. Please tick here if you prefer not to receive such information by post ☐ phone ☐ We occasionally pass your details on to carefully selected companies whose products and services we feel may be of interest to you. Please tick here if you prefer not to receive such information by post ☐ phone ☐



GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE:

- Save over £15 a year – that's 30% on the shop price*
- Pay just £18.45 every 6 issues*
- Never miss an issue
- FREE UK delivery direct to your door

SAVE OVER £15 A YEAR*



3 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE



ONLINE

ANTHEM.SUBSCRIBE
ONLINE.CO.UK/
SUBSCRIPTIONS/ITALIA
ENTER CODE: **ITP124**



BY PHONE
0844 322 1254

OVERSEAS READERS
PLEASE CALL
+44 (0) 1795 592848
QUOTE CODE: **ITP124**



BY POST

COMPLETE
THE FORM
OPPOSITE



It's hard to imagine these horses could have stirred up so much hatred. But though this is a story with a happy ending, only five years ago things looked bleak.

A scenic view of Lake Como, Italy. In the foreground, a brown horse is partially submerged in the calm blue water, its reflection visible. The background features a lush green hillside with scattered trees and a dense forest of tall, thin trees along the shoreline. The sky is not visible, but the overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.


THE HORSES OF BISBINO

Lake Como is the backdrop for the dramatic story of a herd of wild Haflinger horses and their struggle for survival. It's a story that – without the help of some very special people – could so easily have ended in tragedy. **Jan Mazzoni** reports...

DISCOVER ITALIA!



I'm put instantly in mind of a 1930s film siren – when I reach out she hesitates, almost touches my fingers, but then something spooks her and, tossing her head, she skips back to the trees



It's early morning in the mountains above Lake Como, cold for May. Around me hovers an assorted bunch of bleary-eyed volunteers with mud-caked boots, scarves coiled around necks. We nod to each other, mutter *buongiorno*. The only sounds are the cat-like call of a buzzard, a stick cracking underfoot – and the soft snort of a restless horse. Finally one comes close to the fence of their enclosure. And I'm put instantly in mind of a 1930s film siren, flaxen hair falling seductively across one large brown eye, a firm young body clad in gold satin. When I reach out she hesitates, almost touches my fingers, but then something spooks her and, tossing her head, she skips back to the trees.

Others in the herd are restless too. They know something is up. And they're right.

We're there for the transhumance, a twice-yearly tradition more common in southern Italy, usually involving livestock. Our task, though, is to walk twenty-four beautiful yet decidedly skittish blonde horses up from their winter quarters to the gentian-covered slopes where they will spend the summer grazing freely, happily and, most importantly, safely.

Now the gate swings wide and they emerge, falling into step behind a dark horse with rider, one of the Green Jacket volunteers who've been involved with this story from the start. Bringing up the rear, a mare and leggy foal. We follow on – local enthusiasts, tourists, young and old – all anxious to do our bit.

The three-hour journey climbs mostly through woods and countryside. We go too through a sleepy town where locals lean out of shuttered windows, smiling as the horses clip-clop by. And then we reach our destination, weary, but thrilled to watch as the horses fan out, gallop and roll and munch on the lush greenery. They will stay here until November, when they'll be rounded up and walked back down to their winter quarters. For now, though, they are in paradise.

It's hard to imagine they could have stirred up so much hatred. But though this is a story with a happy ending, only five years ago things looked bleak.

When their owner, a farmer who lived at the top of Monte Bisbino, died some years earlier, the horses were simply abandoned. Natural food and shelter were plentiful, and at first they managed without going near habitation – until the severe winter of 2008-'09 when over a metre of snow fell. Close to starvation the desperate animals had no choice but to go down to the villages to find food. What they found instead was a distinctly cool welcome. ➤

In no time the complaints began. These brutes had forced their way onto private land, stolen food meant for farm animals, even eaten flowers left in the



Yet even now they're not safe. Take Luna, born with a white half-moon on her forehead, for one short summer she enjoyed life on the grassy slopes. Then she just disappeared.

cemetery. They were a menace, dangerous. When the authorities did nothing, angry farmers took matters into their own hands. The terrified horses were shouted at, shot at, constantly risking broken legs as they fled for their lives. Someone suggested driving them into a ravine, and shortly after, a young, healthy stallion was found dead at the foot of the rocks. Even more worrying was the idea that they should all be rounded up and sent for slaughter.

It was at this time that a group of local horse lovers got together, determined to save this rare herd. With the Swiss border so close – some of the horses had been in trouble on that side of the mountains too – the local media in both countries were approached. And as news of their plight spread, so did offers of help.

There were legal complications galore, practical issues to be sorted, vital funds to be raised. But eventually, the Horses of Bisbino Association was formed, with responsibility for the animals shared between Italian and Swiss enthusiasts. The aim is for the horses to live a life as natural as possible, spending their summers roaming free on mountain pastures, their winters lower down on land kindly donated by the town council.

Yet even now they're not safe. Take Luna, her name was chosen by local schoolchildren even before she was born (obligingly she arrived with a white half-moon on

her forehead). For one short summer she enjoyed life on the grassy slopes. Then she just disappeared.

Another foal made the mistake of becoming too tame, would take food from children's hands, even come at their call. He too was there one day, gone the next.

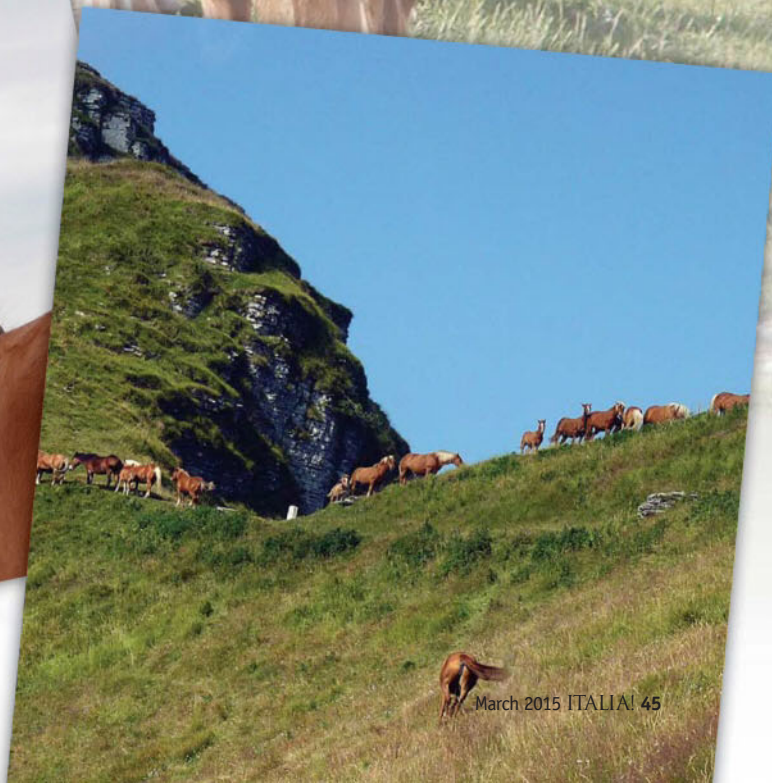
It's possible that a number of the missing horses were taken to become family pets. In an area where horsemeat is still popular, there's also the possibility that they met a nastier end. *Pastissada de Caval* is a hearty local stew, and – if you can afford it – tender foal steak is a speciality in many city restaurants.

There are natural dangers too of course: a difficult terrain, snakes, wild boar – and giving birth in bad weather. A pregnant mare who evaded the transhumance and ended up trapped on a snowy ledge was lucky. She was rescued by helicopter. Sadly, her foal didn't survive.

But the dedication of the association and its supporters is clear. In summer volunteers check the horses regularly. In winter, they provide hay, water, veterinary care. All this costs money of course, and the biggest challenge the association faces is raising that money. Fortunately, a British charity – the Anglo-Italian Society for the Protection of Animals (AISPA) – makes regular donations. Its supporters are only too happy to help ensure that the blonde horses of Bisbino stay safe for many years to come. ■

INFORMATION

- To make a donation, go to www.aispa.org.uk
- For more details of the horses and the transhumance, see www.cavallidelbisbino.ch



GRAND HOTEL FASANO

Wellness & Relax Hotel, Lake Garda

This is how elegant perfect relaxation can be: the sophisticated **Grand Hotel** in Gardone Riviera lies on one of the finest sites in the region. Standing on the shores of Lake Garda, it pampers its guests with unforgettable moments of enjoyment...

In its fabulous setting on picturesque Lago di Garda, the luxurious hotel jewel is the perfect place from which to explore the picturesque landscape of the lakes of upper Italy. Embedded in a 12,000-square-metre park landscape with palms and banana trees, this oasis of relaxation radiates an exotic flair. The rooms and suites of the five-star hotel impress with tasteful *grandezza*, the interior with its cream hues creates an elegant lightness that encourages wellbeing. Tradition and modernity are combined harmoniously. The history of the Grand Hotel Fasano stretches back to the 19th century. At that time the splendid residence was a hunting lodge of the Austrian royal family, the pheasantry giving the estate its name.

The Villa Principe, located in the hotel park, also offers accommodation of the highest standard. The boutique hotel is part of the Grand Hotel Fasano, with guests at the villa enjoying all of the benefits of a renowned hotel. Located directly on the lake, villa and hotel both offer numerous options for active enjoyment. Water sports of all kinds as well as walking and cycling are particularly enjoyable in this breath-taking setting. Golfing enthusiasts will also find ideal conditions here. The nearby, first-class golf courses offer a challenge for every playing level. Exploring the charming surroundings in a wonderful car is both exciting and stylish in equal measure. Guests of the hotel can rent a Ferrari California and delight in both the landscape and the gently flowing lines of this extraordinary sports car. A voyage of discovery on water is equally exciting. Lake Garda shows its finest side in a top-of-the-range designer day cruiser. In brief: all holiday wishes come true in this charming region with its year-round mild climate.

Complete relaxation is easily achieved at the Grand Hotel Fasano. This view is also shared by the readers of *VIP International Traveller*, who designated the charming refuge Best Wellness Resort with the Readers Travel Award 2012. The elegant domicile not only offers its guests a grandiose setting, select interior and first-class service, it also boasts an exclusive wellness centre, the opulent elegance of which is reminiscent of the thermal baths of ancient Rome. Body and soul can wallow in glorious relaxation at the AQVA SPA. On a floor area of 1,500 square metres guests can enjoy a select bathing landscape with indoor pool, Jacuzzis in indoor and outdoor areas, saunas, steam baths, Kneipp facility, adventure showers, quiet zones, fitness room and solarium. Beauty treatments and massages in the beauty farm deliver



care with products from Aveda, renowned for their natural and high-quality ingredients. Spa visitors can choose from numerous select treatments.

AQVA PARC is the name of the new open-air wellness area.

Two pools have been added and connected to the AQVA SPA inside area: a heated infinity pool with relaxing atmosphere, and a sport pool with cooler temperature and a kids' area with a long waterslide. Herewith the wellness area has been extended to a surface of more than 3,500 square meters and the spa is now one of the largest and finest in Italy.

The palate, too, is deliciously pampered at the elegant Grand Hotel. Each of the four hotel restaurants is a meeting point for gourmets. Chef de cuisine Matteo Felter is responsible for the excellent culinary offerings. The young and extremely talented chef was born and grew up by Lake Garda. Here he was taught the secrets of traditional Italian cuisine as a child, secrets that he now shares with his guests. Matteo Felter gathered experience at the leading gourmet temples of northern Italy. His imaginative creations have their origins in typical regional recipes – yet at the same time are modern and innovative. Light dishes such as salads, homemade pasta, fish or meat from the barbecue are served at midday at La Terrazza, by the lake. Gourmet delights are also to be found at La Darsena. Dinner in the gourmet restaurant Il Fagiano is always a highlight, but a very special treat is to sit on the terrace by candlelight, accompanied by the glittering lights on the lake shore and the soft ripple of the waves. ■



GRAND HOTEL FASANO
VILLA PRINCIPE

CONTACT DETAILS

► GRAND HOTEL FASANO & VILLA PRINCIPE

Corso Giuseppe Zanardelli 190, 25083 Gardone Riviera (BS), Italy
☎ +39 0365 290220 Fax +39 0365 290221 info@ghf.it www.ghf.it





MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (1475-1564) died at the age of 89. He never married and he had no children. He dedicated his entire life to his work and he worked all the time. He considered himself, first and foremost, to be a sculptor, though he also excelled in the other major arts: painting and architecture.

When Michelangelo was 15 he was one of a small group of teenage boys apprenticed in a sculpture training workshop under the patronage of the leading merchant family in the city, the Medici. Lorenzo the Magnificent de' Medici was the head of the family and he took an active interest in the garden, located in their private outdoor space not far from the family home. After a few months, Lorenzo the Magnificent invited young Michelangelo to live with the Medici family and he was treated like a member of the family. Lorenzo the Magnificent patronised genius and he recognised greatness in Michelangelo. Living with the Medicis in his teenage years proved to be life-changing and provided solid philosophical and spiritual foundations for the rest of his life and his work. It was during this period that he developed the belief that sculpture was his God-given talent. It was his

The Deposition of Christ

Nicodemus helped Christ down from the cross after the crucifixion. In this composition Michelangelo made the face of Nicodemus his own – it is a self portrait

calling, his vocation, and the avenue through which he could express his deep strong faith.

Michelangelo's last sculptural work was for his own burial tomb. He was in his late 70s when he started it and spent eight years working on it. He spent the last 30 years of his life living in the Eternal City and he planned for his earthly resting place to be inside the great basilica, Santa Maria Maggiore. The composition featured four figures: the Virgin Mary, the dead Christ, Mary Magdalene and Nicodemus. It is often referred to as his last *Pietà* (Madonna with the dead Christ), or, his Deposition of Christ. The block of marble, however, proved to be of poor quality and after nearly one decade he abandoned this personal commission. His close friend, the wealthy banker, Francesco Bandini, acquired the unfinished work and he had Michelangelo's close friend and assistant, Tiberio Calcagni, bring Mary Magdalene to a finished state.

Nicodemus helped Christ down from the cross after the crucifixion. In this composition he is placed behind Christ holding him up, nursing him. Michelangelo made the face of Nicodemus his own: it is a self portrait. This is a deeply personal work. Christ represents the embodiment of his faith and Nicodemus is symbolically Michelangelo and he is presenting to the world the way in which he personally upholds his faith. Nicodemus was also supposedly a sculptor and thus the symbolism is reinforced. The way Michelangelo reinforces, strengthens and displays his faith is through the creation of beautiful and powerful sculpture. This is a very challenging sculptural composition to have attempted as it is four figures from one block of marble (*ex uno lapide*) and was a technical tour de force. Mary Magdalene and Nicodemus often represent the penitents, and in the dusk of his own life Michelangelo thought more and more about Redemption.

This is a also work which represents a new artistic concept for the time as it was not commissioned by a third party. In the Renaissance all artists were commissioned to produce works of art; they never chose the subject matter of the works they produced. From the 1400s they had increasingly more freedom of expression and style, but the subject matter was always commissioned by somebody else, like an architect works today. However, this was a purely personal work and the only work that he created without a patron. ■



Michelangelo's portrayal of Nicodemus

ABOUT THE WRITER

FREYA MIDDLETON is a private tour guide and writer who lives in Florence, Tuscany. You can read her blog online or learn more about her tours at www.freyasflorence.com

DISCOVER ITALIA!

GASTRO SKIING

Sebastian Cresswell-Turner discovers the best way to combine good food with good skiing in the Italian Dolomites...





Not often do I turn down the offer of a glass of good prosecco, but on this particular occasion, after I had struggled up a long steep slope in ski shoes and without the help of ski sticks, it was not wine that I wanted, but cold beer; and seldom has it tasted so refreshing. “After ze vorkout iss gud to haff ze beer!!” commented a German member of my group. He was right. What made it even better was the setting right under the mountain where the most dramatic scenes of *Cliffhanger* were filmed; and the prospect, post-beer, of lunch cooked by a two-Michelin-star chef right there, in a snow-bound mountain refuge at an altitude of 2,000 metres in the Italian Dolomites.

Famously, one of the many pleasures of a skiing holiday is that you take so much exercise

that you feel free to eat and drink what you want. A stiff gin & tonic or two at the end of a hard day’s skiing? No problem. Unlimited quantities of cheese fondu? Fair enough. Here, however, in the Sud-Tyrolean locality of Alta Badia, the combination of food and skiing has been taken to a different level, so that what is on offer is not just good food everywhere, but food of the most outstanding quality. So if what you want is a gastro skiing holiday in Italy, Alta Badia is indisputably the place to go to.

Furthermore, it is not just in the resorts beneath the mountains that you eat well, but in a whole series of huts and refuges high up on the snowy slopes – a fact that is all the more impressive if you consider the logistical problems involved in supplying these places. For example, the Club Moritzino, built in

Clockwise from far left: Enjoying the local speciality – an orange-coloured drink called Bombardin, which is drunk hot with cream on top; Murin après-ski club. Inset, two seafood dishes and a dessert from Club Moritzino, high in the mountains.

I looked forward to lunch cooked by a two-Michelin-star chef right there, in a snow-bound mountain refuge at an altitude of 2,000 metres in the Italian Dolomites



Clockwise from above: Plating up food in a gourmet ski-hut in the mountains; panoramic mountain triptych at Alta Badia; beer on the terrace; two professional skiers in professional kit

1966 at an altitude of 2,100 metres, specialises in fish, freshly caught and flown in by helicopter every day. As a general rule I like to eat fish near the sea and mountain food in the mountains, but when I saw the quality of what was on offer, I was not inclined to complain. Washed down with an excellent Alto Adige sauvignon blanc, the black tagliolini with shavings of black truffle was one of the best fish dishes I have had anywhere; and it was just one of several to choose from. Then you ski it off, working wonders for both your body and your conscience.

Not only is the Alta Badia area home to three chefs with four Michelin stars between them, but the locals have set up their own so-called 'gourmet ski safari', a scheme in which five mountain refuges and gastro-huts now participate. Each of these places serves seriously good food and wine, all are open from 11am to 3.30pm throughout the season, and for skiers wishing to eat at all five huts, a €45 ticket gives you one dish of your choice in each of them. Rather self-indulgently, we did three in a single afternoon. In one of them we also had a delicious local speciality called Bombardin, a rich hot orange-coloured drink

topped with cream – perfect just before you hit the slopes again.

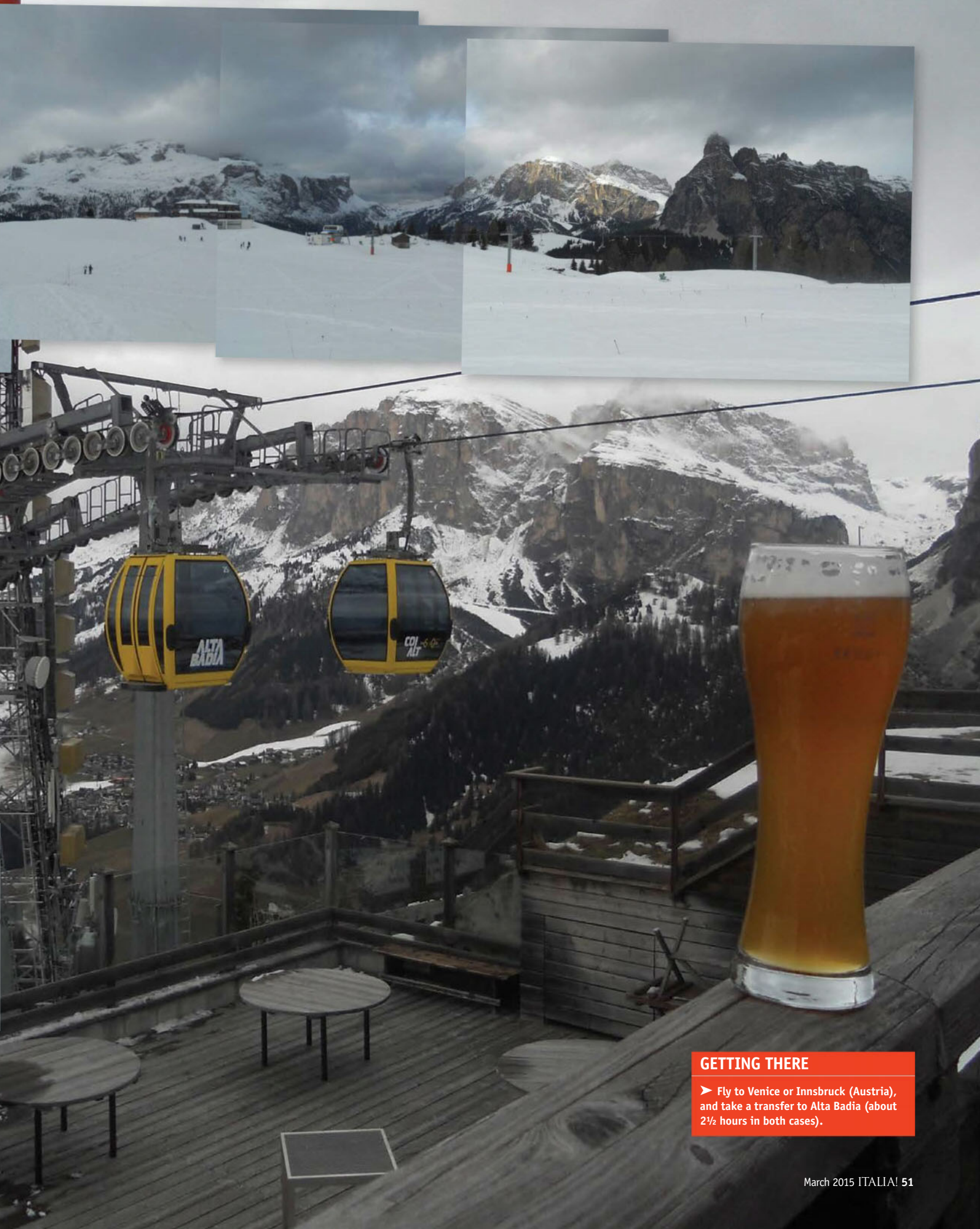
If the cooking here is world-class, and if the skiing is first-rate, the scenery is as spectacular as anything you will find in the Alps. Most iconic of all is the Sassongher mountain, lately of *Cliffhanger* fame. Otherwise, you are surrounded by the virgin immensity of the mountains, and by complete silence. Perhaps there is something, too, about the camaraderie that skiing creates, because everyone here is tremendously friendly. I heard, for example, of a woman who lost her wallet and had it returned to her hotel immediately, with the banknotes untouched. In how many places does that happen?

After you leave the slopes, it is of course time for the *après-ski*, and the place to go hereabouts is a friendly hang-out in Corvara called L'Murin, where there is a good DJ and a decent dancefloor. I was, however, puzzled by the opening hours – 15.30 to 20.45 every day – until someone explained to me that up in the mountains everything happens earlier than in the fleshpots of the plains below.

After dinner at your hotel, the most lively night scene is



Not only is the Alta Badia area home to three chefs with four Michelin stars between them, but the locals have set up their own so-called 'gourmet ski safari'



GETTING THERE

► Fly to Venice or Innsbruck (Austria), and take a transfer to Alta Badia (about 2½ hours in both cases).



Clockwise from above: Bottles at the bar of Club Moritzino, from where you have a view of the mountains beyond; quaint mountain vehicle; accordion player in typical South-Tyrolean dress.

in a recently opened bar, again in Corvara, with the intriguing name of Tòccami, meaning 'Touch Me'. As you walk in, the local ski-guides shamelessly eye up the most recent arrivals, but it's all entirely harmless, and you reflect, once more, on the palpable feeling of camaraderie and good humour. Then, around midnight, it's off to bed, because the folk around here are, in the main, a sober, hard-working lot; and after a day on the slopes you are in any case more than ready to turn in. (In fact, since many Italians like to get up late when they are on holiday, British visitors here will often find that if they are out in good time, they have the slopes almost to themselves.)

What, though, of the cost and the logistics of a skiing holiday in Alta Badia? Granted the expense of transfers and of equipment hire and of ski-passes, a certain expenditure is inevitable. One word of advice, though. Unless you are happy to spend a small fortune in the local shops, do be quite sure to get all your skiing clothes before you go out there. If you are anywhere near

London, by far and away the best option, I was glad to discover, is to get yourself kitted out by Libby de Rougemont (www.skiderouge.com), who has an enormous stock of skiing clothes at bargain prices for both children and adults and who offers invaluable advice about what you do and do not have to take. I saved myself much time and money by putting myself in her hands.

For those with enough energy and ingenuity, it is quite possible to put together your own skiing trip and to find your own way around the ski slopes. If, however, you want to be well looked after, the upmarket tour operator Powder Byrne (www.powderbyrne.com) is by far the best specialist for Alta Badia, and will organise the whole trip from start to finish, including all transport and a full-time concierge service, so that at no stage do you have to worry about anything whatsoever.

One of their directors had a few other tips, too. Even for experienced skiers, it is a good idea to have a skiing lesson with a professional on the first morning. In my case,

this was invaluable, because as I discovered when I got onto the slopes, the modern 'carver' skis require a quite different technique from the old-fashioned sort on which I learned to ski as a boy, and my instructor put me right. And then there is much to be said for employing a ski-guide, who will know exactly where to take you and when, which will make the whole experience infinitely more enjoyable. As a general rule, therefore, put yourselves in the hands of professionals if you possibly can.

If, finally, you want to spoil yourself on your return journey, it would be a pity indeed not to pay a brief visit to Venice, a two-and-a-half hour drive from Alta Badia. To be on the slopes of the Dolomites one moment and on the Grand Canal the next seems almost incredible – until you discover that it is in fact entirely possible. ■

INFORMATION

➤ Further information from www.altabadia.org

Read ITALIA! on any device, any time!



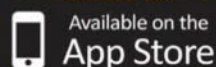
DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE APP TODAY

Free preview issue

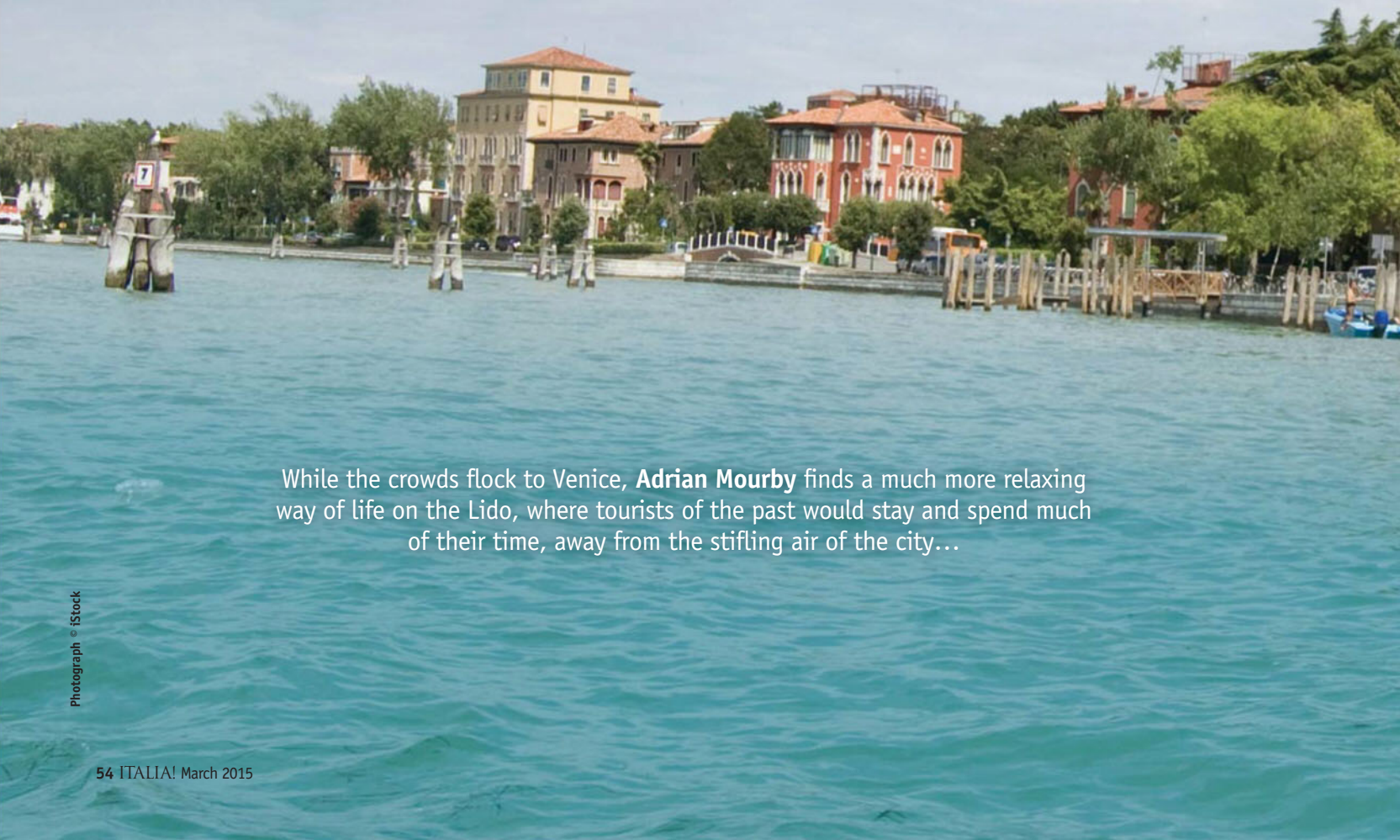
Single issues just \$5.99/£2.49

Subscribe to 6 issues for just \$16.99/£11.99

Search for *Italia!* and download your FREE App today



Lido di



While the crowds flock to Venice, **Adrian Mourby** finds a much more relaxing way of life on the Lido, where tourists of the past would stay and spend much of their time, away from the stifling air of the city...

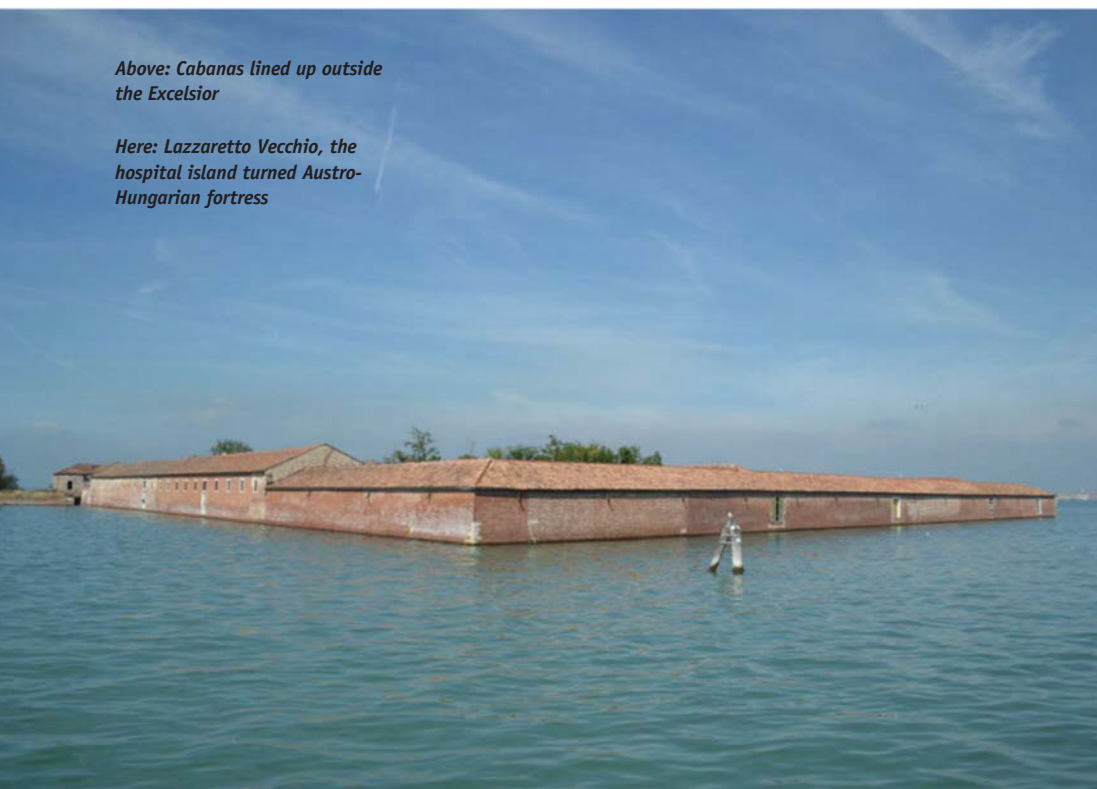
Venezia





Above: Cabanas lined up outside the Excelsior

Here: Lazzaretto Vecchio, the hospital island turned Austro-Hungarian fortress



You can hear the silence of the Adriatic from up here. It doesn't so much lap the shores of Lido di Venezia as kiss the sand and withdraw. This morning I woke up very, very early in the Excelsior Hotel. I'd flown in from Boston last night and at 6am I'm aware that my bodyclock is still on Massachusetts time. Unable to sleep, I open the shutters on a scene of almost complete silence. The Adriatic is hardly moving in the grey light of dawn while five floors below six men in shorts are silently raking the beach.

Lido is an odd place, an Art Nouveau (or Liberty-style) island that guards the lagoon on which Venice sits. In the 19th century visitors would stay here, where there was sea-bathing and a complete lack of pestilence. They might visit Venice in the afternoon for the churches or in the evening for the casino, but their days, and their nights, were spent on the calm, affluent shores of Lido.

View of the beach
from the Excelsior

Photography © Kate Tadman-Mourby unless otherwise stated



Below I can see the staff of the Excelsior opening up the scores of cabanas for which guests will pay a daily rental dependant on their view of the sea

The cabana with its deckchairs and tables – and waiter service across the hot afternoon sand – was an essential accessory for a holiday in Venice right up until the 1930s. Down below I can see the staff of the Excelsior opening up the scores of cabanas for which guests will pay a daily rental of €90 to €120 depending on proximity to the hotel and the quality of sea view.

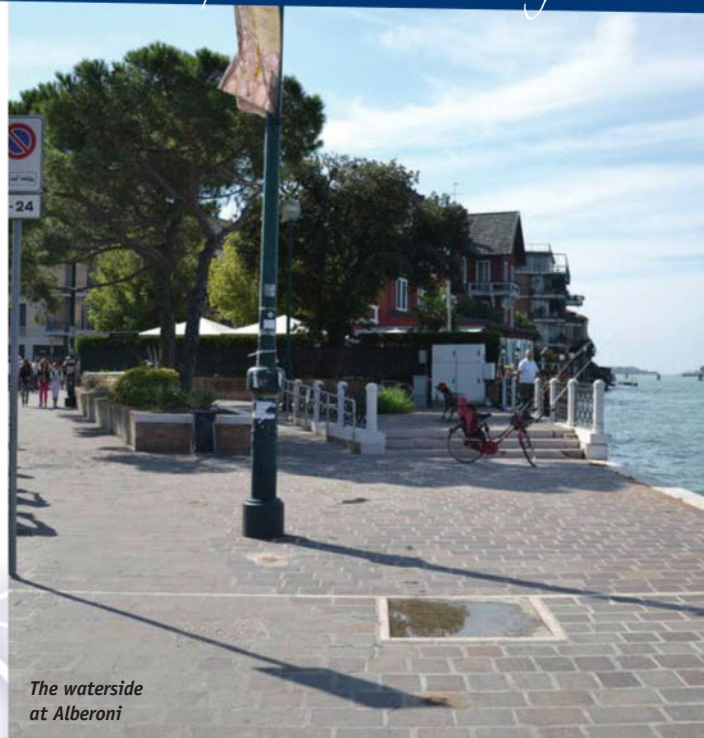
My journey from Boston yesterday was nightmarish. Changing planes at Heathrow I found there was an air traffic controllers' strike that held me up several hours and in Milan where I was supposed to board a train to Venice, there was a taxi strike. But somehow I made it to Piazza San Marco five minutes before the last hotel shuttle left. The voyage across the lagoon was serene and at the Excelsior's jetty, at the end of a long leafy canal, I was assured that they had already prepared room service. I had texted ahead and asked for what I genuinely believe to be

the best seafood carpaccio in Italy. It didn't disappoint.

And now I have a day on Lido before I get to check of progress with the hotel's new Presidential Suite. Anyone who knows the extraordinary profile of the Excelsior will be familiar with its magnificent dome, which has been a hollow, theatrical shell since the great Giovanni Sardi designed the hotel in 1908. This year and last a new duplex presidential suite has been under construction within that dome, the biggest suite in Venice. It will be reserved every year reserved for the top stars of Venice's film festival, an event that started at the Excelsior and still occurs every September on Lido.

I've come here to see how work is progressing but that won't be until this afternoon at the earliest, so I have a long morning to fill.

I have a pre-breakfast swim, if you can call it that. The beach slopes



The waterside
at Alberoni

WHERE TO STAY

► HOTEL EXCELSIOR VENICE

Lungomare G. Marconi, 41

☎ +39 041 526 0201

hotelexcelsiorvenezia.com

Located right on Venice Lido beach, the Hotel Excelsior is a masterpiece of Venetian architecture dating back to the early 1900s. An exclusive 5-star Deluxe Resort of Moorish style and recalling a fabulous Venetian Renaissance palace, it is ideal for family holidays, romantic getaways, conferences or special events in Venice.

► GRANDE ALBERGO

AUSONIA & HUNGARIA

Gran Viale San Maria Elisabetta, 28

☎ +39 041 242 0060

www.hungaria.it

A historic residence with a one-of-a-kind atmosphere with a Thai Spa and wellness center, the Grande Albergo Ausonia and Hungaria is one of the most prestigious 4-star hotels in Lido di Venezia, overlooking the Gran Viale Santa Maria Elisabetta, just a few minutes from the dock where the ferries leave for historic downtown Venice.

► CA' DEL BORGO

Piazza dell'Erbe, 8

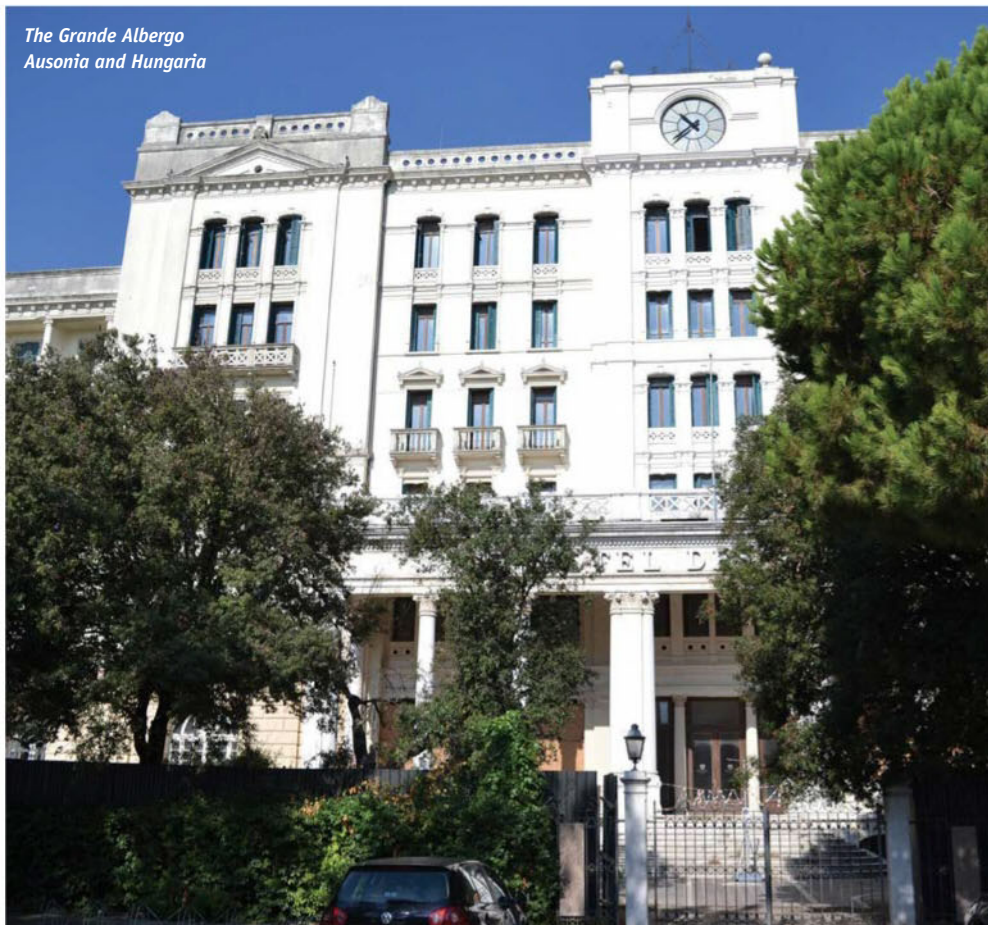
Malamocco

☎ +39 041 770749

www.cadelbordo.com

Ca' del Borgo is a splendid bed and breakfast inside of a 15th century palace, located in the wonderful Venice Lido. It was the residence of Venetian nobles who enjoyed the beautiful location and its mild winter and cool summer climate.

*The Grande Albergo
Ausonia and Hungaria*



*I find myself in a Liberty-style suburb full of tall old houses and slim hotels
where I come across the glorious Grande Albergo Ausonia & Hungaria*



*Man with dog at
Malamocco*

down so gracefully that you need a lot of patience to walk out far enough to get even your knees wet. Now, as in the 1920s, Lido is more about cutting a *bella figura* on the beach than watersports. The Excelsior has an outdoor pool for those who really want to swim rather than just have a paddle and a pose.

My breakfast is conducted surrounded by waiters. Afterwards I borrow a hotel bike to explore the island. Lido is rather neglected these days, like some great-aunt our parents used to visit. We know she is there but the photo-ops of San Marco are more alluring. Time to get properly acquainted.

I head north past the convention centre which every September becomes Palazzo del Cinema for the Venice Film Festival. It was built for the fifth festival in 1937 and has a modernist Mussolini touch. The

first festivals were actually held in the Excelsior's 600-seat cinema but the Palazzo can offer three venues, including a 1,100-seat main cinema from 1953 and, of course, a red carpet. As, Federico Fellini once remarked, "For a film director, entering the Palazzo del Cinema at the Venice Film Festival is like passing a final exam."

Sooner than I expect – in fact only 500 metres north along Lungomare Marconi – I come upon Hotel des Bains where that quintessential Lido film, *Death in Venice*, was set, written, and partially filmed. What a shame it's all boarded up at the moment. I hadn't realised that you have to cross the road to get to the hotel's beach. When Dirk Bogarde as Von Aschenbach looks wistfully out of his window towards the beach, Lungomare Marconi is just below him, out of shot.



A dredger traverses the lagoon

Turning inland, I find myself in a Liberty-style suburb full of tall old houses and slim hotels. At Caffè Tila I stop for a great espresso served by a lovely 85-year-old Venetian lady called 'Cina. The coffee is perfect and the small garden comfortable but what's remarkable is the photograph on display of her famous father in the cafe from the 1930s. Behind him is a picture of Mussolini. When she catches me checking this out, 'Cina explains, "In those days you had to."

Buzzed on caffeine I'm keen to start pedalling properly. In 2009 cyclists competing in the Giro d'Italia charged down Via Sandro Gallo at speeds of 60 kmh – three times what I'm clocking up so far. But before I get to that long road that gazes back over the lagoon to Venice, I come across the glorious Grande Albergo Ausonia & Hungaria. This hotel is the absolute of Liberty-style. Its huge multi-coloured facade is a mosaic masterpiece and the biggest in Italy, if not Europe. It was created

for the newly-opened Hungaria over three years (1913-1916) by the famous ceramicist and sculptor, Luigi Fabris from Bassano del Grappa. This hotel is proof of the affluence of Lido at the beginning of the 20th century. The owners also commissioned the celebrated Milan designer, Eugenio Quarti for its furniture, which was shown at the Salone dell'Arte in Paris before being shipped to Venice. Closed during the First World War, the Hungaria reopened in 1920 and its nightclub, Follies Dancing, became a focal point of the Lido's racy, golden age.

Putting my camera away, I aim for a sprint down the gracious tree-lined sweep of Lido's Art Nouveau's avenues. I bomb down Via Sandro Gallo and then Via Malamocca with the lagoon flashing by on my right, ineffably calm. Today it's like a large piece of a grey-green glass, dotted with little brick hospital islands that used to serve as artillery platforms in the days when the Austro-Hungarian

Empire owned Venice. Just a lone dredger on its way to work breaks the calm of the water.

At Malamocco I turn to the left and enter a small medieval town square. After all that Liberty style this is a complete surprise. Malamocco is where the Venice we know and love began during the reign of Theodatus, the second doge (742-755 AD). Theodatus it was who moved the ducal seat from Eraclea to this low spit of land now known as Lido. It's remarkable to think that the nascent Venetian empire was run from this little moated city facing into the lagoon until 812, when it decamped to Rialto.

There's a parish church here dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta that dates from the 12th century, and a 15th-century Palazzo del Podestà that displays the Lion of St Mark.

I check out the inevitable plaques to Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II and say hello to a small dog whose owner is sitting out on the tiniest ➤

The stillness of the lagoon contrasts with the busyness of Venice itself



The Excelsior's restaurant



Kirk Douglas in a photo at the Excelsior

“Piazza Maggiore” I have ever seen, then it's on to Porto degli Alberoni, the actual entrance to the lagoon, four kilometres south.

The village of Alberoni was named after its *alberi*, trees that local fishermen could see from the Adriatic and so know their way home. They used them to navigate themselves back towards the lagoon. Alberoni has a few cafés and a ferry terminal if you want to island-hop your way to the mainland.

Now I turn round and cycle up the Adriatic side of Lido, alongside a crudely-hewn sea wall. It's clear from the big white rocks piled on this side of the island what a job Lido does in keeping rough seas out of the lagoon. There are little beaches scattered here and there between the rocks with informal shelters made out of driftwood. They get more salubrious the further north you head, but it's clear this is where the locals swim for free while we're paying €120 a day for a cabana

on the Excelsior's perfect beach. This is not *bella figura* territory.

By lunchtime I'm back at the Excelsior and wander into the hotel bar with its photos of movie stars who attended the film festival in the

INFORMATION

► www.venice-tourism.com

GETTING THERE

- British Airways (0844 493 0758; www.ba.com) flies twice daily from London Heathrow to Venice and from Gatwick from £91 return.
- easyJet (0330 365 5000; www.easyjet.com) offers lights to Venice Marco Polo from London Gatwick, Luton & Southend from £61.98 return (based on two people travelling on the same booking).
- Voyages SNCF (0844 848 5 848; www.voyages-sncf.com) offer return rail fares from London to Venice from £216 standard class; price includes the overnight train from Paris to Venice.



Makeshift beach huts on the Adriatic side of the Lido

On the Adriatic side of Lido it's clear from the big white rocks piled on this side of the island what a job Lido does in keeping rough seas out of the lagoon

1950s. There's Kirk Douglas with his Van Gogh beard, there's Ingrid Bergman with Roberto Rossellini, and a moustachioed Orson Welles photographed while pretending to write something. There's also a jolly snap of early paparazzi (from the days before the term was coined). They are sitting on deckchairs in their suits with big happy smiles.

Head barman Antonio Micelotta is setting up the bar in his white jacket and happy to talk. He's been in the business for 30 years now and tells me that drinking trends have changed a lot in Venice. Who has drinks before lunch these days? How did a simple drink like Prosecco become so popular around the world? Who has been his favourite customer?, I ask. Antonio is too tactful to tell me but he does relate the time that Al Pacino came in and ordered a San Pellegrino.

“He went outside to sit on the terrace by himself. The look in his eyes – it goes right inside you. I’ve

served Robert de Niro and Robert Redford here but with Al Pacino there is this vibration.”

I wish I'd been there.

I go to check to see if the new Presidential Suite is ready to be viewed but the answer is still, “Not yet” and so I go back to my room to take in the sea view again. There are quite a few people on the beach now but it's still very quiet down there. Lido di Venezia is a curious place, the relict of a previous golden age but a place where Al Pacino drinks San Pellegrino in the night, a Liberty-style suburb of Venice that has a medieval city hidden away at its core. And it's certainly a very relaxing place to cool your heels.

I could take the hotel's shuttle over to San Marco this afternoon but it's bound to be crowded and to be honest, I quite fancy another seafood carpaccio. Maybe I'll ask to eat in on the beach. ■



A plaque honouring Garibaldi at Malamocco



Offering great little escapes across Italy...

With over 45 years experience in the travel industry, Tony and his team are here to put together the perfect tailor-made Italian break for you. Hike the beautiful Tuscan Hills, relax on stunning Sicilian beaches, sample wine at top Italian Vineyards and explore the history of Italy's most famous cities. Whatever type of holiday you enjoy and however you prefer to travel Tuscan Secrets has something to suit your every need. Give them a call today to plan your perfect trip.

☎ 01344 627586 sales@tuscansecrets.com



Property For Sale Marche

Marche Properties... Buy, Restore & More



☞ All Property Types, All Budget Ranges

- Habitable / Partially Restored
- Ruins to Custom Restore
- Fully Restored / Finished
- Apartments / Townhouses

☞ Detailed & Accurate Property Descriptions

☞ Registered, Licensed Real Estate Agent

☞ Prompt, Professional Service



View Now



www.propertyforsalemarche.com +39.347.5386668

PIVA 01534470438



PUGLIA

PROPERTY FOCUS

Home to the famous *trulli*, and one of Italy's driest region, **Puglia** is served by two major airports and the property market here is buoyant...

LINDA TRAVELLA

LINDA TRAVELLA, DIRECTOR OF CASA TRAVELLA LTD, HAS BEEN SELLING PROPERTY IN ITALY FOR 26 YEARS



The region of Puglia has only recently become more popular as a second home destination and an area to relocate to. On the Adriatic and Ionian Seas the area offers everything if you are looking to own a home. Enjoy the enchanting olive groves of the area, the shimmering sea and some of the pretty and interesting towns and villages such as Ostuni, Alberobello, and the pretty village of Santa Maria al Bagno, don't miss of course the baroque city of Lecce. The area is well served by the airports

of Bari and Brindisi, meaning that it is possible to fly with scheduled and budget airlines. Property in Puglia is excellent value with *trulli* (cone-shaped buildings only found around the Ostuni, Alberobello area of Puglia) to restore starting at €60,000. You can find a 2 or 3 bedroom property with a pool not far from Ostuni from €150,000; with the largest selection of properties ready to move into, detached and with olive groves, from around €250,000. If you like to be by the sea, a house at Marina di Lizzano is on sale at €110,000 and a 2 bedroom apartment with shared pool in a small residence on the Ionian Sea at Santa Maria al Bagno at €140,000. Puglia is a diverse area and you can live in the country amongst the olive groves and be by sea in 10 minutes – and all at an affordable price!



€100,000-€250,000

SANTA MARIA AL BAGNO

This lovely 2 bedroom apartment with a shared pool and sea views forms part of a luxury complex of 12 residences just a few minutes' walk from the centre of Santa Maria al Bagno, 5km from Nardo, 10km from Gallipoli, 25km from Lecce and 65km from Brindisi International airport. The apartment is on the first floor and provides spacious accommodation with a large living room with kitchen to view, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, balcony and roof terrace with sea view. The property also benefits from air conditioning, and private parking, and has use of the large swimming pool with surrounding terrace and barbecue area. The apartment is being sold partly furnished, and is an ideal investment.

Price €140,000 Contact ☎ 01322 660 988 www.casatravella.com



€100,000-€250,000

FRANCAVILLA FONTANA

A masseria in need of renovation, but structurally in very good condition, outside Francavilla Fontana, equidistant from the Ionian and Adriatic coasts and 25km from Brindisi. About 370sqm of accommodation over 2 floors: Lower level: a main room of some 70sqm with fireplace, 4 further rooms and an additional room (probably a chapel) attached but slightly separate from the other rooms. Upper level: about 85sqm offering 6 rooms with vaulted ceilings and 3 terraces, totalling about 100sqm. The internal courtyard measures about 200sqm and has a water cistern for water supply. It is also possible to get permission for an artesian well to create a pool. About 4,000sqm of land, and it is possible to purchase further land if required.

Price €180,000 Contact ☎ 01322 660 988 www.casatravella.com



€250,000-€500,000

OSTUNI

Lovely 4 bedroom villa with its own swimming pool just 5km from Ostuni, less than 5km from the sea, and 25km from Brindisi airport. About 150sqm of accommodation over two floors: a large lounge with extended space for an office or study, kitchen with dining area for 8 people, laundry room, and 4 en-suite bedrooms, two on the lower floor, totally independent with their own verandas. The villa has eco pellet stove heating, mains water and electricity and a large BBQ terrace. Externally there is a large pool with terrace, a pool equipment room, two further sheds, and parking for 6-8 cars. The garden is well laid out with many trees and cactus beds as well as an orchard with fruit trees.

Price €280,000 Contact ☎ 01322 660 988 www.casatravella.com



€250,000-€500,000

VILLA WITH POOL, BRINDISI

This 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom villa is built in traditional Italian country style in stone and is set in over 14,000sqm of land. It is conveniently located 17km from Brindisi and 7km from the beaches and only 5 minutes to the local town for shopping and amenities, yet is in a quiet location surrounded by olive trees. The garden is well kept with lawns, fruit trees surrounded by many oleander flower bushes and palm trees. There is the possibility to build an extension and a new annex to cater for the larger family with many visiting relatives and friends. The house is being offered for sale with all furniture and fittings and is ready to move into.

Price €290,000 Contact ☎ +39 333 878 6738 info@casapuglia.com
www.casapuglia.com



€2,000,000-£3,000,000

MASSERIA COCCIOLI, LECCE

An historical 14th century masseria with large swimming pool on 5 hectares of land outside Lecce and 6km from the beaches has come up for sale. The masseria has been carefully restored since 2006 and is currently operated by the family as a B&B with 8 double bedrooms, 3 apartments, reception room, and terraces. It has its own private 3 bedroom house for the owners. It can easily be upgraded to a five star operation, used as a care home, as a grand family home for the large family and for entertainment purposes – or why not share with business colleagues and friends! Extension possibilities.

Price €2.2million Contact ☎ +39 333 878 6738 info@casapuglia.com
www.casapuglia.com



€1,000,000-£2,000,000

MANOR HOUSE IN SELVA DI FASANO

An elegant 6 bedroom, 480sqm property refurbished in the best quality in 2004. This is one of the absolute top properties in this famous residential area and would make a great family villa and a place to entertain family and friends. An imposing entrance with double gates leads into a marble tiled drive way through an impressive 2,700sqm garden, professionally designed and immaculately maintained with beautiful flower beds, lawns, olive trees and palm trees. The swimming pool is 12 x 6m on an elevated sun deck, the roof terrace is huge with splendid views towards the Adriatic Sea.

Price €1.2million Contact ☎ +39 333 878 6738 info@casapuglia.com
www.casapuglia.com

LE MARCHE EXPLORER MARCHE PROPERTY NET



Exclusive Holiday Homes, Villas and Apartments with
Swimming Pool; Sales, Restorations & Rentals



Rentals & Restorations

www.le-marche-explorer.com - 0039 333 9791785

Sales & Investments

www.marchepropertynet.com - 0039 339 1019042



Casa Travella Ltd

Founded in 1987 on Lake Como
Specialists in many areas of Italy

FOR EXPERT PROFESSIONAL AND INDEPENDENT ADVICE

with 25 years experience

OVER 700 PROPERTIES IN MOST AREAS OF ITALY

Email us at lindatravella@hotmail.co.uk

or call us on +44 (0)1322 660988

visit us at www.casatravella.com

Casa  **Puglia.com**
estate agency

Buying a property in Puglia? Visit us as casapuglia.com.

We act as your agent to help you find the right property and secure it at the best price.



Owning a property in Puglia? We give you the freedom when you're away
and look after your property as if it was our own.

info@casapuglia.com • phone: 0039 333 878 6738 • www.casapuglia.com

English speaking agency based in Fasano

Lakes & Mountains

Are you starting to think about taking a short holiday on the **Italian Lakes**? Check out these selected *Italia!* companies for ideas and inspiration...

North Italy offers quality, personally selected holiday accommodation

NORTH ITALY

Lake Maggiore is a dream destination all year round, from the spring blossoms to the summery beaches and water sports, from the autumn gastronomy festivals to the

close collaboration with the property owners. And our team of representatives on site will provide on-going support throughout your stay on the lake.

Our team of representatives on site will provide on-going support throughout your stay

sunny winters and nearby Alps. The Italian Lakes' beauty is never ending and here are three reasons to book a villa through North Italy Villas...

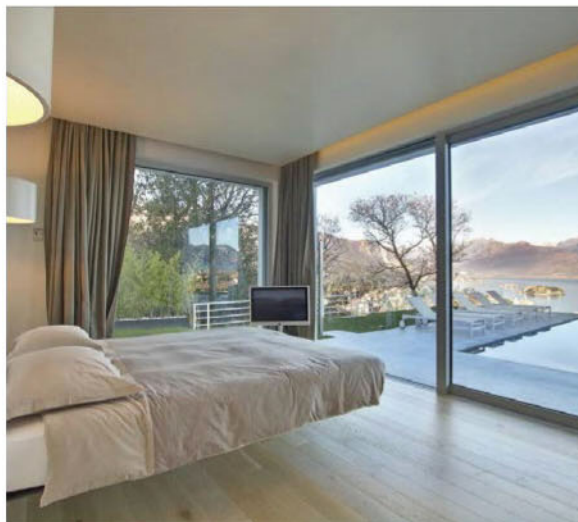
- **QUALITY OF CHOICE** North Italy has the largest offer of rental villas at Lake Maggiore. We are very proud of our selection of homes with private pools, unique lakeside villas and modern villas with incredible lake views.
- **PEACE OF MIND** All villas are managed directly by us in

- **THE EXTRA MILE** A wide range of extra services can be arranged, from private chefs to wine tastings, personal guides and excursions, boat hire, and more.



CONTACT DETAILS

► **NORTH ITALY**
Inspiring Villas
www.northitaly.eu
info@northitaly.eu
☎ +39 33 3384 8900



LAKE COMO HOMES



Imagine gliding over a shimmering lake with stunning skyline peaks as your backdrop. Now moor up and relax at a lakeside café with a glass of wine, a plate of pasta and the music of Italian conversation!

This is Lake Como, recognized as one of *the* places to visit in a

stunning views. We also have offices on the Lake and the team to make this dream a reality. We can organize the boat and the restaurant, the conversation is an Italian way of life of course, as is the quiet lake tranquillity and an emotive lifestyle that may change you for ever!

Moor up and relax at a lakeside café with a glass of wine and a plate of pasta

world that has so much to see! The advantage of Lake Como is its accessibility by air, train and road. It is still hidden away like a jewel in a velvet glove, close to the Swiss border, and those in the know come back year after year, bewitched by its effects.

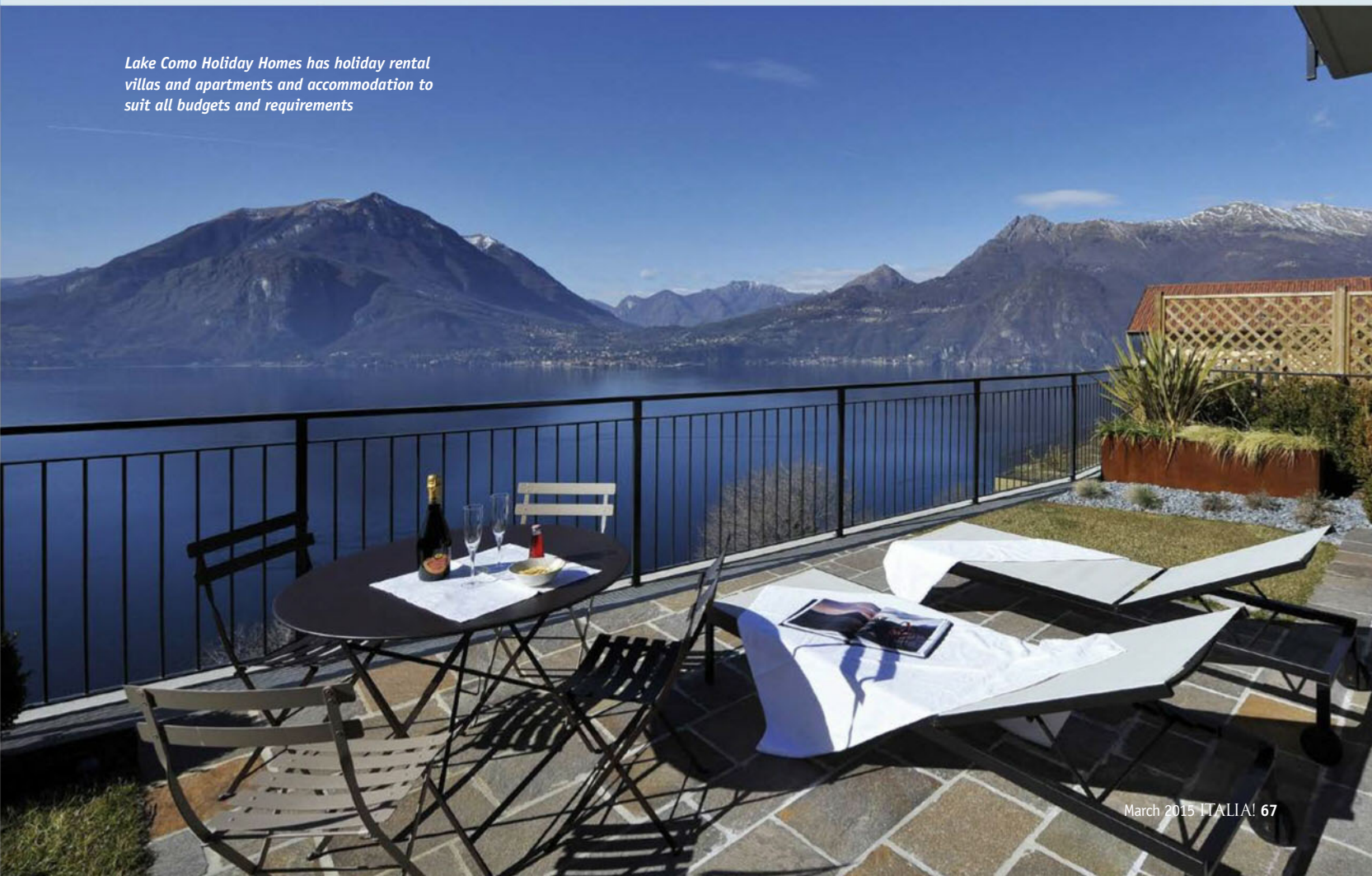
We represent a wonderful collection of owners' properties, from magnificent traditional lakeside villas to luxury apartments with

If you are thinking of a romantic break, a family holiday, a short break or even an extended stay, we can offer you a range of accommodation and services unsurpassed on the Lake and to suit all budgets.

CONTACT DETAILS

► LAKE COMO HOMES
www.lakecomohomes.com
☎ 0207 099 0868

Lake Como Holiday Homes has holiday rental villas and apartments and accommodation to suit all budgets and requirements



Dream holiday rentals in Northern Italy

Discover our exclusive selection of luxury villas

VACATION IN ITALY

~
Lake Maggiore, Como, Orta
Liguria
Tuscany

NORTH ITALY
INSPIRING VILLAS

www.northitaly.eu / info@northitaly.eu / +39-33 33 84 89 00



Culture & History, Opera & Romance

Year-round City breaks

Inghams
ITALY

CELEBRATING
80
ANNIVERSARY

For those who **love Italy** as much as we do!

- Choose to visit **Florence, Rome, Venice or Verona**
- Plus **NEW: Naples and Palermo**, both are ideal cities for some winter warmth
- **Inghams PLUS** added-value
- Chance to win a copy of our **Italian Cookbook** when you order our Italy brochure

BEACHES / CITIES / EXPLORER HOLIDAYS / LAKES

To find out more call **01483 345 831**
For a copy of our 2015 brochure
visit inghamssitaly.co.uk/brochure

If you request a copy before 31 March we will enter you into a draw for the chance to win a copy of our **Inghams Italy Cookbook**. N.B. The Inghams Italy Cookbook is not available for purchase.



Apps available for
iOS & Android

Building the Dream

Last month, **Jane Smith** told the story of the demolition phase of her rebuild. Now the builders have returned to begin laying the foundations for her new house...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Smith runs one of the largest estate agencies in southern Le Marche – www.magicmarche.com, jane@magicmarche.com. Her husband, Richard, runs a restoration management company – www.smithpropertyconsultancy.com, richard@smithprops.com

Our builders took just two days off over Christmas and at 08.00 on the 27th December they were back on site. Richard and I had spent Boxing Day working out the new orientation of the house and putting small stakes in the ground to mark the new corner positions. This would maximise the magnificent views from the kitchen and living room. The site looked bare and desolate, but not for long. The team began using a small digger to dig the foundation channels for all the supporting walls. These had to be a depth of 1.5m (1.7m in a couple of crucial areas) and this work took two days. Once finished we could clearly see the definition of our new rooms and the main wall divisions, even though it resembled something a child might carve in a sandpit!

A light screed was put over all the 'room' floors, and the team then set about adding shuttering to the foundation channels, to retain the concrete when it was poured in. Wherever we could we used old bits of corrugated iron or wood from our demolition for the temporary shuttering. (Why buy if you can reuse?) Gravel was then shovelled into the base of the foundations. Next began the much longer and precise task of filling the foundations with long cages of reinforced steel which would form a rock solid 'ring of steel' round the house at base level. All new build houses and big restoration projects in Italy must conform to these stringent earthquake-resistant regulations. Ours certainly would! This stitching together of the iron cages took ten days to complete. Then we were ready for the concrete mixers.

They arrived like the cavalry; two spotty mixers in tandem. The first of nine loads in one day! Each in turn

extended their proboscis noses and began pouring concrete into the foundations, remotely controlled by the mixer driver. Our team raked and moved and filled as necessary, ensuring there were no voids or air pockets. They had to move fast as this stuff sets in just a few hours.

Then we had our next brush with bureaucracy. Our builder called us the following morning to say work had stopped. They had left the site. The reason? A Health & Safety representative had arrived from the government body called ASUR. It was a speculative visit, as he had heard there was a new build happening. He didn't like the steep, muddy slope behind the house and felt that it posed a threat to our team. The team received a fine for working in a perilous environment and we were told to build a retaining wall for this area. But not just any old wall – it had to be made of iron reinforced concrete and to a height to satisfy ASUR. The cost: €4,000 and six days lost in the schedule before the team could continue with the main build.

When work restarted, 'igloos' were put in place on the floors of each room. These are black plastic dome-like structures which sit under the base of the house, forming a labyrinth of air channels and allowing it to 'breathe' for ever more.

After 20 days of intense work, with the foundations and igloos all finished, one fine and an unexpected new wall, a final top layer of concrete was poured over everything and all this precise and beautiful work disappeared! However, we now had a strong and breathable base to work from. Onwards, upwards! ■





THE FIAT 500

Built in Turin, Desio (Monza and Brianza) and Termini Imerese (Palermo), between 1957 and 1975, the Fiat 500 is recognised the world over as a symbol of Italian identity...

Measuring just under 3 metres long and originally powered by a tiny 479cc, two-cylinder, air-cooled engine delivering just 13bhp, the Fiat 500 – across its various iterations – had a total production run of just under 4 million models. It became ubiquitous in Italy (though they are very rarely seen these days) and commonplace in many other parts of the world. The model in this picture is the Fiat 500 R, aka the Rinnovata, which was built from 1972-1975 and is distinguishable from earlier, now even rarer, models by its front-hinged doors (the D had back-hinged ‘suicide doors’), by the lack of chrome nudge bar, which characterised the L, aka the Lusso, and by its wheels: the R, aka the Berlina, looks very similar from the outside but had hubcaps. The Rinnovata is a modern ‘supercar’ by Fiat 500 standards, having a 594cc engine delivering 23 bhp and a full synchromesh gearbox – oh, the luxury! ■



ITALIA! GUIDE

Italian

2015

CITY BREAKS

Weekend Breaks 2015 £7.99

and weekend escapes

italytravelandlife.com/italyguides

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE • HOLIDAYS • FOOD • WINE • CULTURE

YOUR ESSENTIAL 48-HOUR GUIDE

22 OF ITALY'S TOP DESTINATIONS

132
PAGES
NEW & FULLY
UPDATED FOR
2015

FROM THE MAKERS OF THE UK'S BEST-SELLING ITALY MAGAZINE

Weekend Breaks 2015 £7.99
ISBN 978-1-909590-87-8
9 781909 590878

On sale now in WH Smiths
and all good newsagents



ROME IS AWASH IN FOUNTAINS. There are giant fountains, like the Trevi, with its cascades of water and a basin carpeted with coins. There are fountains shaped like bee-covered seashells, like sunken boats, soup tureens, and pinecones. You might find a fountain topped with a stack of cannonballs, or with turtles, or stony but sensuous naiads. And on many streets and squares, often near an outdoor market, you will find a humble little fountain, just a curved pipe set in a cast iron post, continually running. You can safely drink from it despite the litter that inevitably collects around the drain. Just stop the downward stream with a finger, and a jet of water will spritz your shirt

from a hole just where the pipe bends down. This is for your convenience in drinking.

These are the *nasoni*, “big noses”, of Rome. And while they may not evoke the grandeur of the city, like the Colosseum or Marcus Aurelius on his horse, they are nevertheless a well-loved symbol of the city. Each of the stubby posts is emblazoned with the city’s motto, SPQR, *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, “The Senate and the People of Rome”.

In ancient times, Rome was famous for its never-ending, always flowing, fresh water

Running noses in Rome

On many streets and squares you will find a humble little fountain, just a curved pipe set in a cast iron post, continually running

supply. For centuries, Romans enjoyed their fountains, elaborate public baths, and even mock sea-battles in the flooded Colosseum. From senators to shopkeepers to slaves, Romans did not lack for water. The fact that, within the city, water was distributed by a system of lead pipes, has led some to speculate that the ancients suffered from slow lead-poisoning. But, because the water flowed continuously, it never sat in the pipes for long, and probably wasn’t seriously contaminated. The constant flow of water also flushed the city’s sewers, making the city much more hygienic than it would have been otherwise.

Rome’s water supply was severely damaged by the Barbarian invasions that finally brought down the Western Roman Empire, and it was not until after the Renaissance that a series of Popes began restoring and replacing the aqueducts and plentiful water returned to the city. Magnificent fountains, many in the Baroque style, celebrated these achievements. But to bring water closer to the people, hundreds of smaller fountains, usually troughs supplied by a spigot or two, were installed in Roman neighbourhoods. The troughs, often recycled ancient sarcophagi, were convenient for horses as well as people.

By the 1870s, the price of empty sarcophagi seems to have increased, for the city administration began to install the cheaper *nasoni*. They were a hit with the people. The humble metal posts with the big noses now number around 2,500. They’re popular with dogs and pigeons, which drink from the end of the pipe. You may see a tourist, bent double, trying to do the same; but of course, you and I do not; we know the secret. And we don’t carry water bottles, either; we just follow our *nasoni*. ■



Rome has fountains of all shapes and sizes



The correct way to drink from a nasone

ABOUT THE WRITER

JOE GARTMAN is a freelance writer based in Utah. A passionate amateur of art and history, and an avid traveller, he spends much time in Italy.

Calling
all USA readers

SAVE 48%

When you subscribe to **ITALIA!** magazine today

If you are reading from the USA, we've got a fantastic offer just for you! Now better than ever before, **Italia!** is your complete guide to **Italian living** – with even more **recipes**, **foodie news** and **reviews**, plus **gourmet travel** for all you **Italian food and wine lovers!** Subscribe today and pay just \$68 for 12 issues

ITALIA!
Issue 124 March 2015 £4.40
HOLIDAYS PROPERTY FOOD WINE CULTURE PEOPLE
AMALFI'S JEWEL
Take time out for peace and tranquility on the stunning coastal island of Ischia
The beaches of Venice
Get away from the city and relax on the Lido
HEALTHY ITALIAN RECIPES TO ENJOY
A NEW...
The...
pr...
SAVE 48%
on the shop price
Get the next 12 issues for just \$68
HOLIDAYS PROPERTY FOOD WINE CULTURE PEOPLE
ISLAND ES
Treat yourself to some winter sun breaks in the capital cities of...
WHY NOT LIVE THE DREAM?
Buying a bargain holiday home
VISITING MEDIEVAL LE MARCHE
Urbino, where history comes alive
COOKING & EATING THE NATURAL
Recipes that are good for you and the...
FOOD WINE CULTURE PEOPLE
IN VENICE
Guide take you to the secret the floating city
HORSES ON THE LAKE
A remarkable tale
TOP CLASSIC RECIPES
Back to the ba...
Issue 124 March 2015 £4.40
9 771744 756051



**DIAL
TOLL FREE
800 428 3003**

QUOTE CODE **USA15**



**SUBSCRIBE
ONLINE AT
www.imsnews.com/italia**

QUOTE CODE **USA15**

Italia! magazine's subscriptions are now handled in North America by IMS News.
Call at local rates, in your hours and pay in US/Canadian dollars

4 takes on WATERCRESS

The watercress season is just around the corner, with the first **bunches appearing** soon. It thrives on chalky soil and in cool summers, so British watercress is as good as you'll get, but still we have the Italians to thank – it was **introduced to these islands** by the Romans...





Watercress pesto linguine

Linguine al pesto di crescione

SERVES 4
► Preparation
 30 minutes
► Cooking
 20 minutes

350g linguine (or pappardelle)
 1 small garlic clove
 25g pine nuts
 1 tbsp capers
 25g parmesan cheese
 2 x 85g bags watercress
 60ml olive oil
 a squeeze of lemon juice
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 50g pitted black olives, roughly chopped
 150g cherry tomatoes, halved

Cook the pasta in boiling salted water for 10 minutes – or according to packet instructions – until just tender and ‘al dente’.

Reserve a handful of watercress leaves. Whilst the pasta cooks, place the garlic, pine nuts and capers in a food processor and blend until finely chopped.

Add the cheese and watercress and blitz again until finely chopped.

With the motor running add the olive oil and finally the lemon juice. Season to taste.

Drain the pasta in a colander, then return it to the pan, add the pesto, olives and tomatoes and toss together.

Add the reserved watercress and serve.



Asparagus, watercress and cherry tomato risotto

Risotto agli asparagi, crescione e pomodori ciliegini

SERVES 4
► Preparation
 15 minutes
► Cooking
 30 minutes

4 tbsp olive oil
 4 shallots, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, sliced
 2 bundles of asparagus, trimmed and cut into 3cm lengths
 100g red and yellow cherry tomatoes, halved
 200g risotto rice
 1 small glass of white wine
 1 ltr hot chicken or vegetable stock
 2 bunches of watercress, roughly chopped
 50g lightly salted butter, cut into cubes
 50g grated parmesan
 salt and cracked black pepper

Sweat the shallots and garlic with 2 tbsp olive oil in a large saucepan for 10 minutes until they turn translucent.

Meanwhile, heat a medium-sized pan and add the rest of the oil. When the oil starts to smoke, add the asparagus and tomatoes. Season and cook for 30 seconds, until the tomatoes wilt, then remove from the heat and set aside.

Stir the rice into the onions and cook until the rice has turned translucent, then add the wine and simmer until it has reduced by half. Now start to add the hot stock, stirring between additions. Keep adding the stock a little at a time until the rice is ‘al dente’. About 20 minutes.

Stir in the watercress, asparagus and tomatoes. Remove from the heat and add the butter and half of the parmesan. Season with salt and pepper. Serve in warm bowls, sprinkled with the rest of the parmesan.



Smoky meatballs with watercress in tomato sauce

Polpette con crescione e sugo al pomodoro

- SERVES 4**
 ► **Preparation**
 20 minutes
 ► **Cooking**
 30 minutes
- 85g bag watercress, finely chopped**
450g pack extra-lean minced pork
6 rashers smoked streaky bacon, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
50g fresh breadcrumbs
the zest of 1 lemon, finely grated
1 medium egg, beaten
salt and freshly ground black pepper
700g jar Sugocasa with herbs, or 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
300g basmati rice
75g brazil nuts

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Mix together the watercress, pork mince, bacon, garlic and breadcrumbs in a large bowl. Stir in the lemon zest and egg, and season well. Mix really well until everything is evenly combined. Divide the mixture and shape into 20 x 2.5cm balls. Place in a shallow roasting dish and cook for 15-20 minutes, shaking occasionally, until golden on all sides. Pour in the sugocasa and return to the oven for a further 10 minutes. Meanwhile, put the rice into a saucepan, add a little salt and cook following packet instructions. Put the brazil nuts on a small baking tray and cook for 8 minutes, until golden brown. Allow to cool, then chop roughly. Stir the nuts into the rice, then divide between serving plates. Serve with the meatballs drizzled with some of the sugocasa sauce and garnished with watercress.



Cod and watercress parcels

Bocconcini di merluzzo e crescione su un letto di riso

- SERVES 2**
 ► **Preparation**
 10 minutes
 ► **Cooking**
 20 minutes
- 250g cod (or other sustainable white fish)**
85g (1 bag) watercress
1 green chilli, chopped
2 cloves of garlic, peeled
2 slices of Parma ham
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
150g brown rice
1 small red onion, diced
50g sundried tomatoes, chopped
50g black olives, stoned and chopped
black pepper

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Take the cod and pile a quarter of the watercress along the top of the two fillets (reserving the rest for later) along with the chilli and garlic.

Carefully wrap the cod and its topping in the slices of Parma ham. Place on a baking tray and sprinkle with the olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Bake for 15 minutes.

Bring 360ml of water to the boil. Add the brown rice, stir and leave to simmer for 15-20 minutes, until the water is all absorbed and the rice cooked.

Add the onion, tomatoes and olives to a hot pan and lightly sauté. Once the rice is cooked, add to the pan and mix together, adding pepper to taste.

Spoon some of the brown rice mixture onto a plate. Place the remaining watercress on top. Remove the cod from the oven and place on top.

SERVING THE PERFECT ITALIAN COFFEE AT HOME

They say the only way to end a good meal or dinner party with friends or family is to offer real Italian coffee. Most Italians certainly think so, and so does De'Longhi: designing premium Italian coffee machines in Italy...



De'Longhi Scultura

£199.99

This simple-to-use traditional Italian espresso coffee machine provides a truly hands-on Barista experience and the joy of creating your perfect Italian coffee at home. Simply use fresh ground coffee and froth fresh milk with the integrated steam wand to make your coffee shop favourites. Unite it with the matching kettle and toaster in the Scultura range to bring Italian sophistication to your kitchen.



De'Longhi Eletta

£899.99

Using only fresh beans and fresh milk, the compact Eletta bean-to-cup serves all your coffee shop favourites, from a frothy cappuccino to a smooth flat white, to a crema-rich espresso – and all at the touch of a button. What's more, De'Longhi brings you LatteCrema: an integrated milk carafe with auto cleaning, serving dense, creamy micro-foam straight to your cup.



These compact coffee machines serve your coffee shop favourites, from a frothy cappuccino to a silky-smooth latte, to a crema-rich espresso – Visit: www.delonghi.co.uk

HOW DO I MAKE REAL ITALIAN COFFEE AT HOME?

Whether you like to create your perfect Italian coffee or have it served to your cup at the touch of a button, these De'Longhi coffee machines make all your coffee shop favourites using freshly ground coffee and freshly frothed milk for the perfect taste...

Espresso

The basis to all Italian coffee drinks and the most important one to master. An espresso is a strong shot of coffee, with a rich intense flavour.

A standard espresso is made with 7g of coffee, extracted to 25-30ml. Two espressos should take around 20-25 seconds from beginning to end of delivery to balance the coffee flavours.

The quality of a good espresso is shown by a 3-5mm hazel-coloured 'crema'. The secret to the best Italian espresso? Fresh, finely ground beans!

Cappuccino

Traditionally a breakfast drink in Italy and often enjoyed with a pastry, consisting of a shot of espresso with hot and densely frothed milk.

The ideal ratio is 1/3 espresso, 1/3 hot milk, 1/3 froth. The secret to a perfect cappuccino? Micro-foam milk froth using fresh, whole milk: dense, creamy and not exceeding 70°C

Caff latte or Latte

Often professional baristas can be seen creating latte art (palm leaves, hearts). The art is actually the colour contrast between the milk froth and the espresso crema.

A caff  latte is made using a large shot of espresso topped up with hot, steamed milk that has been frothed to a silky smooth texture. The secret to good latte art (apart from lots of practice!) is to froth fresh milk with only very fine bubbles.



For more coffee recipes download the FREE De'Longhi COFFEE EXPERT app for mobiles

Healthy Cooking

This month we continue our recent theme of basic Italian cooking, with four healthy recipes devised and presented by food writer and self-taught cook **Ursula Ferrigno** to keep you warm and happy through the rest of the winter...



Farro and bean soup

Farro con fagioli

► **SERVES 8** ► **PREPARATION** 15 minutes plus overnight soaking ► **COOKING** 1 hour 40 minutes

250g dried borlotti beans, soaked overnight, drained and rinsed

2 medium white onions, peeled, 1 finely chopped

5 sage leaves

3 garlic cloves, peeled

4 tbsp olive oil

3 medium red onions, peeled and finely chopped

4 carrots, scraped and diced

4 celery sticks, trimmed and diced

a handful of flat-leaf parsley leaves

275g canned Italian chopped tomatoes and their liquid

8 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil (estate bottled)

200g farro, soaked overnight, drained and rinsed

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the beans in a large saucepan with the peeled whole white onion, half the sage, 1 garlic clove, and enough water to cover by at least 5cm. Cover and cook for 1 hour

or until tender. When the beans are cooked, pass the contents of the pan through a food processor or a mouli.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the red onion and the remaining white onion, which have been finely chopped. Add the carrots, celery, most of the parsley, remaining garlic and sage leaves, the tomatoes and 3 tbsp of hot water; continue to cook for 10 minutes. Add the farro and simmer on a low heat for 30 minutes until tender. Add salt and pepper and the bean mixture. Stir and warm through until hot. Adjust the seasoning and serve with a drizzle of olive oil and the remaining parsley.

Chickpeas with saffron

Ceci allo zafferano

➤ **SERVES** 6 ➤ **PREPARATION** 10 minutes plus overnight soaking ➤ **COOKING** 1 hour

500g dried chickpeas

3 tbsp olive oil

1 onion, peeled and chopped

6 ripe tomatoes, skinned and chopped

a pinch of dried chilli (peperoncino), crumbled

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 saffron strands

Soak the chickpeas in cold water, covered, for 12 hours. Drain the chickpeas and place in a saucepan. Add plenty of cold water and bring to a boil. Boil vigorously for 10 minutes, skim the scum off the top then turn the heat down as low as possible and cook for 30 minutes, until tender. Drain.

Heat the olive oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook until translucent. Add the chickpeas, then the tomatoes and chilli. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for 20 minutes. Dissolve the saffron in a little water and add to the pan. Mix well. Transfer to a bowl and serve.



Caper salad

Insalata pantesca

➤ **SERVES 6** ➤ **PREPARATION** 15 minutes plus 20 minutes soaking ➤ **COOKING** 15 minutes

55g Pantelleria capers,
or just good salted capers

3 new potatoes,
peeled and cut into 2cm cubes

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 fresh sage leaves

4 plum tomatoes, quartered

1 red onion, peeled and sliced into rings

400g tin best-quality tuna in olive oil

32 black olives, stoned

2 bunches rocket

a handful of fresh basil leaves, torn

FOR THE DRESSING

5 tbsp Sicilian extra-virgin olive oil

1 tbsp red-wine vinegar

Peel and chop the onion.

Soak the capers in water for 20 minutes,
changing the water two to three times,
then drain.

Cover the potatoes, in a saucepan, with
salted water and add the sage leaves. Bring
to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for
about 15 minutes, until tender. Drain and
set aside.

To make the dressing, in a small bowl whisk
the extra-virgin olive oil and vinegar together
with some salt and pepper.

In a salad bowl, combine the capers,
tomatoes, onions and tuna, olives, rocket
and potatoes. Add the basil, drizzle with the
dressing and serve.



Lentils with chestnuts

Lenticchie alla montanara

➤ **SERVES** 8 ➤ **PREPARATION** 10 minutes ➤ **COOKING** 50 minutes

2 tbsp olive oil

4 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed

400g Castelluccio lentils

a handful of fresh thyme leaves, chopped

2 bay leaves

150g canned Italian chopped tomatoes

25 chestnuts, roasted and roughly chopped

a pinch of dried chilli (peperoncino)

4 tbsp estate-bottled extra-virgin olive oil

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

a handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves to garnish

In a saucepan, heat the olive oil, then add the garlic and lentils. Stir to coat the lentils with the oil and garlic. Add the thyme and bay leaves.

Cover generously with cold water, place a lid on the pan and simmer gently for 20-30 minutes. Keep checking the pan; the water must not completely evaporate.

Add the tomatoes, chestnuts and dried chilli, and continue simmering for 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve garnished with extra-virgin olive oil and parsley leaves.



PRESERVED & JARRED VEGETABLES

Antipasti are a way of life in Italy, and an essential aspect of the **nation's favourite first course** of any meal is preserved vegetables. Here we present a selection from the UK high street.

Go to any restaurant in Italy and you'll be provided with the option (and who could turn it down?) of a selection of *antipasti* to start your meal. The meats are a must – a particular establishment's freshly-sliced hams should never be disregarded. But you should never partake in the meat without the veg! And when it comes to an antipasti presentation, vegetables picked in the summer and preserved in oil for consumption throughout the rest of the year reign supreme. Unfortunately, most of us, especially in the UK, don't have large vegetable gardens and so can't do as many Italians do and grow and preserve their own summer produce. So what's the alternative? We've visited supermarkets and well-know delis in order to find out just what's available...

PEPERONCINI LOMBARDI CURLY GREEN CHILLIES IN BRINE

From **Jamie's Italian delis**
(not available online)

Price **£6.50** for 300g

Be warned: these are hot. Not 'blow your head off' hot, but you certainly know when you've taken a bite – eating whole chillies in one go is not recommended! These chillies from Lombardy have a really pleasing sourness to them, making them ideal both as an aspect of an antipasti selection and as a topping for pizza or as an ingredient in a simple pasta sauce. You could try dicing them or even blending them and mixing them with pesto for a pasta dish with a kick, or just chop them up and mix them with fresh tomatoes and slices of salami. Matching them with wine is pretty well impossible. If you're going to have a drink with them, we'd suggest a very dry martini over lots of ice.

VERDICT ★★★★★

They pack a punch, but these chillies are great, either on their own, cooked whole on top of a pizza, or chopped up and tossed into a salad.



1 POMODORI SECCHI SOTT'OLIO (SUN- DRIED TOMATOES IN OLIVE OIL)

From **Carluccio's**
www.carluccios.com
Price **£3.95**, 200g

Sun-dried tomatoes are a staple of Italian diets: a means of preserving the precious fruit from plants that have been watered every day for months to attain perfect ripeness. No one would want all that effort going to waste! These, from Carluccio's are soft and delicate, not too strong in flavour, nor too bitter. Superb on their own or blended and mixed into a pasta sauce.

VERDICT ★★★★★

Far better than the sun-dried tomatoes you'll find in the supermarket, these are soft and delicate, though they have a pretty hefty price tag!

2 TASTE THE DIFFERENT MARINATED SUN-DRIED PEPPERS

From **Sainsbury's**
www.sainsburys.com
Price **£3.50**, 290g

Sun-dried peppers are all too easy to get so, so wrong. Unless they're cooked to perfection they can end up being too soft and lacking in flavour. Thankfully, these ones, from the Sainsbury's Taste the Difference range, manage to maintain their consistency and their taste, making them perfect for inclusion on your plate of lunch-time antipasti.

VERDICT ★★★★★

These delectable peppers won't turn to mush and make a great match with pecorino cheese and freshly-sliced Parma ham.



2



3



4



5



6

3 MARKS & SPENCER ROASTED PEPPERS

From Marks & Spencer
www.marksandspencer.com
Price £2.50, 280g

Preserved in extra-virgin olive oil that's been flavoured with parsley, garlic and rosemary, these small pieces of roasted red pepper are extremely tasty, though their consistency could be considered a little on the soft side (though the skins aren't at all overly tough). They're great tossed with fresh pasta however, to make a simple yet elegant starter dish, and they make a great addition to a green salad.

VERDICT ★★★

Vegetables that have been preserved in oil can soak up too much of that oil and lose their bite. This has happened here just a little.

4 CARCIOFI ALLA BRACE (CHARGRILLED ARTICHOKE)

From Carluccio's
www.carluccios.com
Price £6.95, 280g

No antipasti selection would be complete without a bowl of marinated chargrilled artichokes. These, from Carluccio's, are grown in Puglia and roasted over charcoal for a lovely smokey taste. Lightly flavoured with parsley, they're placed into the jars by hand before being topped up with quality olive oil to preserve them. Not cheap, but then the best things in life very rarely are...

VERDICT ★★★★★

Chargrilled artichokes are never cheap, and these are positively expensive, but if you want the best you'll have to pay for it!

5 TASTE THE DIFFERENCE CHARGRILLED ARTICHOKE

From Sainsbury's
www.sainburys.com
Price £3.50, 290g

A firm favourite at any family gathering, these Taste the Difference chargrilled artichokes are a simple and easy-to-acquire aspect of an antipasti selection. They're delicately flavoured, and the oil is fairly neutral, so they make a great addition to salads, chopped up and added to pasta dishes or tossed over the top of a pizza. Good quality and great for everyday use.

VERDICT ★★★

Not as good as the artichokes from Carluccio's, but then they have the price advantage and still make a decent antipasto.

6 WAITROSE COOKS' INGREDIENTS CHARGRILLED PEPPERS IN OLIVE OIL

From Waitrose
www.waitrose.com
Price £4.39, 280g

We love the Waitrose Cooks' Ingredients range, and this relatively new addition of mixed red and yellow peppers that have been chargrilled and preserved in olive oil is a welcome one. The pieces of pepper are quite small, though they pack plenty of flavour and the oil itself is delicious. Best used as a sauce or topping ingredient however.

VERDICT ★★★★

A balanced mix of red and yellow peppers, these are best used – as it says on the jar – as an ingredient in a sauce or on top of a pizza.

Speak Italian? Speak it better!

Now you can improve or maintain your Italian with *Tutto italiano*, the new, bi-monthly audio magazine for people who love Italy and the Italian language.

Lively, relevant, entertaining

Published six times a year by an experienced team in Rome, *Tutto italiano* not only helps you improve your fluency, it also helps you understand what it is to be Italian. The glossy magazine is packed full of lively articles and up-to-the-minute news covering the whole of Italy from Palermo in the south to Trieste in the north. There are regular features on a range of topics including travel, business, the arts, cinema, politics, sport, *cucina italiana*, popular culture, plus profiles on leading personalities and issues making the news.

Keep your Italian up to date

Alongside each article in Italian, key words and phrases are glossed into English. Every feature is carefully chosen and graded for difficulty so you can assess your progress. Each article will keep you up to date with idiomatic expressions as well as practical information.

Understand Italian as it's really spoken

The accompanying audio CD is the perfect tool for improving listening comprehension and building confidence in speaking Italian. Put together by a team of professional narrators, each 60-minute CD provides well-paced readings of the key articles from the magazine, together with pronunciation and intonation exercises. The audio component of the subscription will enable you to improve significantly your ability to understand Italian as it's *really* spoken.

ITALIA! Magazine SPECIAL OFFER

Order *Tutto italiano* TODAY by calling **FREE** on 0800 141 2210 in the UK (or +44 117 927 2236 overseas), or visit our website at www.languages-direct.com/ITAL115 and as an exclusive offer to ITALIA! Magazine readers you will get £10 off the regular price and an extra issue **FREE** worth over £16!



Key Benefits:

- Speak Italian with confidence by learning Italian as it's really spoken
- improve your vocabulary and listening comprehension
- improve your cultural IQ
- enjoy lively, relevant and up-to-date content
- take advantage of on-going, portable and flexible learning.

Subscribe Today!



Si Please send me one year's subscription - six bi-monthly magazines and audio CDs for £89 (normal price £99) to *Tutto italiano* Audio Magazine + 1 extra FREE issue! ☐

Cheque : cheque enclosed for £89 payable to Languages Direct ☐

Or Card: Please charge my credit card for the sum of £89 only:

Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Maestro ☐

Card number: _____

Expiry Date _____ Card CVV Code: _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Please send your completed order form together with payment to:
Languages Direct, FREEPOST RSKB-KSKR-LYLU, Bristol, BS1 6UX
Outside UK: Languages Direct, Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road, Bristol, BS1 6UX, United Kingdom

60 day money-back guarantee

If for any reason *Tutto italiano* is not for you, just let us know within 60 days, and we'll refund your subscription in **FULL**, and you can keep your first issue. If at any time later you decide to cancel, we'll refund you the cost of any unmailed issues.

To see our full range of excellent language learning materials, including audio magazines for French and Spanish learners, visit: www.languages-direct.com



Media Ref: ITAL115

THIS MONTH'S EXPERTS



GINA STIPO is an Italian-American who runs cookery school *Ecco La Cucina* in Tuscany. Gina has also written two regional cookbooks and trained as a chef in Italy. For more information,

visit www.eccolacucina.com or email ginastipo@yahoo.com



TONY BASSETT is the manager of Tuscan Secrets, a UK-based agency specialising in Tuscany whose services include finding and booking independent hotels, villas, farmhouses and arranging special interest holidays.

Email tony@sunninghilltravel.co.uk or call ☎ 01344 627586 www.sunninghilltravel.co.uk



LAURA PROTTI is dual qualified as an Italian *avvocato* and English solicitor. She has extensive experience in Italian property law, international private law, contract law, succession law, and

taxation, and has assisted with the drafting and updating of books and articles on Italian Law. www.leplaw.co.uk



MARK SWIFT is Marketing Manager at De'Longhi UK and has a wealth of knowledge about coffee. De'Longhi make some of the best coffee machines on the market today – to see

the full range of options for home coffee machines see their website at www.seriousaboutcoffee.com

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Our experts are here to help with all your questions about Italy. Email your questions to italia@anthem-publishing.com, or write to us at our usual address, as given on page 18

HOME-MADE PASTA

Q *I'd like to start making my own fresh pasta. I had some at a friend's dinner party over Christmas and thought it was delicious – so much better than the dried stuff I buy from the supermarket! Can you recommend a pasta making machine? And what is your preferred recipe for fresh pasta made using eggs? Finally, is there a specific type of flour I should use?*

John Chapman, Exeter

A Pasta is one of my favourite things to make. It's so delicious, gives one such a lovely sense of accomplishment and is easy to make once you get the hang of it.

There are two great options for pasta machines: a hand-cranked model, the best of which is by Atlas – I own several and recommend the 180 model, which is 30cm wider than the 150 model; the other is the pasta rolling attachment that goes on the Kitchen Aid mixer. You can order both machines online or find them in good cookware stores and Italian markets.

The basic recipe for fresh egg pasta is 170 grammes of plain flour to one large egg. In Italy we use "00" flour, which is somewhat finer than plain. If it's very dry and you have low humidity in the house, it's helpful to use two egg yolks instead of one egg. The extra fat in the dough helps to keep it moist and pliable in dry environments.

Never put salt in pasta dough, it makes the dough tough. Always salt the water when cooking pasta. Heat the water to boiling, add enough whole sea salt to make it as salty as the sea, put your fresh pasta in all at once, stir it and put the lid on the pot to bring it back to the boil. The pasta should be *al dente*, which means 'to the tooth'. Never rinse pasta, just dress it immediately with the sauce.

Although fresh pasta is delicious and fun to make, dried pasta from southern Italy has an important place on the Italian table as well, and many sauces are only appropriate on the semolina and water pasta from the south.

Buon Appetito!

Gina Stipo, Ecco La Cucina

DRIVING IN TUSCANY

Q *I'm taking my wife to Florence in the spring, but want to spend a day out and about in a hire car to see some of the Tuscan countryside. Where would you recommend, given we'll only have a few hours and I don't want to drive too far. Also, are there any restrictions on taking hire cars into the centre of the city?*

Richard Cleaver, by email

A If your time is limited my advice is drive north west. The terrain is mountainous, particularly up the Serchio valley. A little before the turning for Bagni di Lucca you will see an amazing bridge, dating back to between 1080 and 1100. It's known as Ponte Della Maddelena or Ponte Del Diavolo. The former name dates from around 1500 when a statue of Mary Magdalene stood on its eastern bank.

There is a small car park here, enabling you to stop and walk over the bridge. Do pop into the little café, it's run by a mother and daughter, and they do very nice pasta. Mamma sometimes cracks open a bottle of prosecco!

Continue north along the valley and pull into Barga, a beautiful medieval Tuscan town where English is spoken with a Glaswegian accent! If you have time, visit the cathedral here. Continue north to Fosciandora, cross the bridge and, beside the railway station, you can see what looks like a working man's café. Enter and go to the back room, where all the tables have tablecloths. The chef, Claudio, was brought up in Glasgow, eventually returning home to bring up his family here. He doesn't always bother with menus – trust him! He was trained as a chef, working in some of the best hotels in Europe.

Before returning to Firenze, I suggest just a few more miles driving north to Castellnuovo de Garfagnana. This market town dates back to the 14th century, it has a castle and is well worth exploring.

It's not easy to get in and out of Florence by car and parking will be difficult in the city centre. And for driving around Tuscany, I would suggest you hire a satnav.

Tony Bassett, Tuscan Secrets

FIREARMS IN ITALY

Q A good friend of mine has moved to Italy and has taken up hunting as a hobby. I shoot deer in the UK and have a Class 1 Firearms Certificate upon which my hunting rifles are entered. My friend has invited me to shoot wild boar with him in Tuscany and I'd like to take one of my rifles with me. What are the legalities involved in taking my rifle with me to Italy on the plane, and will I have to obtain a licence specific to that country in order to use my rifle there? The gun I'd like to take is a .308 Winchester. My friend will supply ammunition of that calibre so I won't be travelling with any ammo.

Jonathan Applegate, Somerset

A If you intend to take a firearm overseas you will need to obtain a European Firearms Pass (EFP) which can be issued by the Firearms Licensing Unit of your local police authority. This is required for customs purposes.

Depending on your personal circumstances it may also be necessary to apply for an export licence issued by the ECO (Export Control Organisation). A "personal effect" waiver can be applied in some circumstances and in that case an export licence may not be required.

The EFP authorises the transportation of arms and ammunition within the European Union. You must specify which firearms are to be included on the application. The EFP will expire on the same date as the relative

firearms or shotgun certificate(s).

To transport firearms in Italy you must ensure they cannot be used, or loaded or unloaded, quickly. Rapid use of the firearm must be impossible even in dangerous situations.

Remember though that possession of an ECO-issued EFP or export licence does not absolve you of your export responsibilities. For instance, you must:

- notify your local Firearms Licensing Office and provide proof of export;
- inform the ferry operator or airline you are travelling with that you are carrying firearms, sporting guns or ammunition as they may have additional rules;
- declare that you are carrying firearms to Customs.

You must also ensure that the Italian authorities have authorised the import of the firearm. This can be done by obtaining an Import Permit or PIC from the relevant authority before exporting the firearm(s).

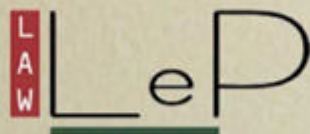
Upon arrival in Italy you must declare the firearm(s) to the relevant local authorities (Questura – Police Station) and take all necessary precautions to protect against theft. Your statement must include all the details and information about the arms you are carrying, their whereabouts and the length of time they will be kept at the stated location.

Laura Protti, LEP Law



Hunting is very popular in Italy

Photograph © iStock



Laura Protti is the founder of LEP Law. She is dual-qualified as an Italian *avvocato* and English solicitor, and specialises in assisting British and Italian clients with matters relating to Italian law. Visit her website at www.leplaw.co.uk for more.

Coffee Corner

GROUND COFFEE

Q I am disabled and have to use a mobility scooter to access my local shops. Unfortunately our local convenience store doesn't stock whole-bean coffee, so I have to buy ground coffee. I love my coffee and at present use a stove-top espresso maker, but it, like me, is getting rather long in the tooth and I'd like to buy a machine that is best for use with ground coffee. What would you recommend? Also, I am trying to be as environmentally friendly as possible and recycle my waste. Can you recycle coffee grounds? I've been told they're good for scattering on the flower beds in my garden. Is that true? Michelle Rossiter, by email

A Since you like espresso-based coffees, a filter coffee maker would not be right for you. Similarly, since you use your choice of ground coffee, a pod or capsule machine is probably not what you're looking for as this limits your choices. Finally a Bean to Cup coffee machine can also use pre-ground coffee, but we would only recommend it if you were likely to use beans often. That leaves you with one option: Traditional Italian. These machines allow you to enjoy a relaxed barista-style experience at home. It's the best-known way to make espressos, but also caffè lattes and cappuccinos using a filter holder, espresso-ground coffee and a milk frother (which uses steam to heat and froth milk). They are easy to use and can also be used with convenient ESE (Easy Serving Espresso) pods. What you will also notice is that you get a much fuller flavour and 'crema' on the coffee, which you would not get with a stove top 'moka'.

Coffee is good for more than just waking you up in the morning! You can fertilize your garden, sprinkle coffee grounds around areas of ant infestation to deter them, and grounds are also said to repel snails and slugs.

Visit our coffee website www.seriousaboutcoffee.com and click on the Products – Find your machine. You just need to answer a few questions and it will automatically by analysing your answers will determine what your ideal coffee machine would be.

Mark Swift, De'Longhi

www.seriousaboutcoffee.com





RED WINES FROM PUGLIA

The heel of Italy is the home of some of the country's most enjoyable robust red wines. **Paul Pettengale** explores the grapes of the region and picks a selection of his favourites...

It's a story that is sadly familiar, though one with a happy ending. Once was a time when the south of Italy, and the particularly poor region of Puglia (the 'heel' of the peninsula), produced wine in vast bulk in a desperate attempt to make enough money to pay rents, given that the prices that could be demanded were so low. Most of this wine never made it into a bottle within its region of origin. Instead it was pumped into containers and shipped throughout the country (and beyond) to be blended with lower-alcohol offerings that needed the 'boost'

The red wines of Puglia are now capable of putting the snobbery of the past behind them

that only the boozy, sun-drenched examples from the far south could offer. It was indeed a sorry state of affairs.

Times have, however, changed. By cutting yields, improving quality (vastly in most cases) and appreciating that pride in quality should take priority over profit in bulk, the wines (the reds, mainly) of Puglia are now really grabbing the attention of the international wine community. The two main grape varieties grown in the region are the soft, gorgeous Negroamaro and the deep, dark Primitivo. And they make some cracking wines in the hands of those wine producers who know when to pick the grapes at perfect ripeness (leave them too long on the vine and you're left with jammy, bloated wines) and how to utilise the combination of hot summer sun and cooling night sea breezes, together with an appreciation that, these days, less is more. Not overly expensive, the red wines from Puglia are now capable of putting the snobbery of the past behind them. Over the page we've picked seven that really deserve to be tried.



DRINK ITALIA!

SALICE SALENTINO RISERVA 'CARTA' 2010, CANDIDO

From Great Western Wine
www.greatwesternwine.co.uk
Price **£10.50**

Harking from the southern tip of Puglia, this is a delightful, easy-drinking red that possesses ripe berry fruit aromas and a distinctive, seductive smokiness. It screams dried fruit to the taste, and remains powerful and robust throughout the chocolatey finish. Very much a food wine, it is made using Francesco Candido's renowned Negroamaro grape vines and shows just what can be achieved with this Puglian favourite without having to empty the coffers!

PRIMITIVO 'JEMA' 2012, L'ASTORE MASSERIA

From Berry Bros. & Rudd
www.bbr.com
Price **£13.95**

Wines made in Puglia utilizing the Primitivo grape variety can be dense, dark and, unfortunately, taste rather over-ripe. This wine from l'Astore Masseria comes from the opposite end of the spectrum. Yes, it's dark in colour, but it retains a freshness and liveliness that lights it up. Plenty of plum and blackberry aromas burst forth, and there are forest fruits on the tongue, but the finish is neither over-sweet nor cloying. Enjoy it with food, however!

PRIMITIVO 2013, NATALE VERGA

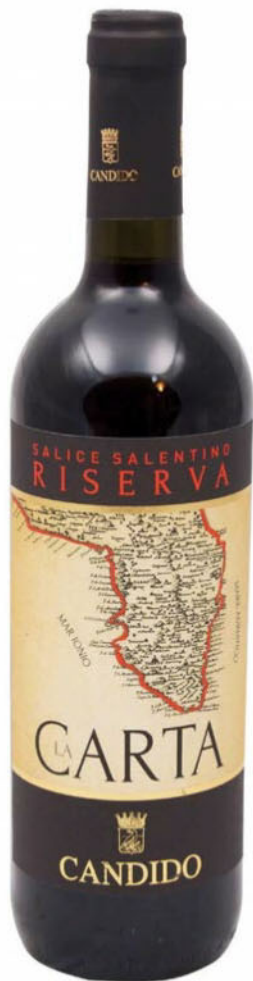
From Majestic
www.majestic.co.uk
Price **£8.99** (see text)

If you prefer your red wines on the easy-drinking side of things, then this is a great place to start your exploration of the reds of Puglia. It's young and lively, though balanced and packing enough punch to make you realise that its fruit has been sun-drenched throughout the region's hot summer. This is more cherry than dark forest fruit, with a clean, 'snappy' finish. It's a rare beast: a wine from the south of Italy that can be drunk without food. What's more, you get 25 per cent off if you buy two.

PRIMITIVO DI MANDURIA 2012, PAOLO LEO

From Waitrose
www.waitrose.com
Price **£10.99**

Between the towns of Manduria and Avetrana, Paolo Leo creates wines of real finesse, using old Primitivo vines to produce grapes that are crushed to produce a juice that is fermented and then spends time in American oak barrels before bottling. The result is a deeply-spiced wine with a lot of power, though one that is well balanced and not at all overly tannic. Blackberries, raspberries, black cherries and blackcurrants all feature. Primitivo at its best.



GREAT WITH...

Roasted red meats – beef especially – or dishes spiced with chilli.



GREAT WITH...

This is a fantastic steak wine – ideally sirloin, ribeye or fillet.



GREAT WITH...

Drink it on its own, or with grilled meats and tomato-based salads.



GREAT WITH...

The complexity and refinement of this wine works well with roast lamb.

PAPALE ORO PRIMITIVO DI MANDURIA 2012, VARVAGLIONE

From Great Western Wine
www.greatwesternwine.com
Price £19.95

When choosing our selection of wines from Puglia for this issue, we attempted to pick wines that wouldn't be too hard on the wallet. Most are around the £10 mark. But if you can afford to spend more then wines from the region can be absolutely stunning, such as this one from GWW. Loaded with dark, crunchy fruit, spiced to perfection, this is a monster of a wine – you could spend three times as much in Chianti or Piedmont. Delightful!



GREAT WITH...

Ripe hard cheeses, rare steaks, grilled lamb chops or sticky stews.

TORCICODA PRIMITIVO 2012, TORMARESCA

From Berkman Wine Cellars
www.sainsburys.co.uk
Price £15.00

Although it's a touch more expensive than many of this wines featured in this issue, this Primitivo from well-respected producer Tormaresca is well worth digging a little deeper into the pocket for. It's a beautifully spiced concoction of black cherries, summer fruits and bitter chocolate with power and refinement in equal measure. The finish is long and lingering and plenty of draw to have you reaching for the bottle to refill your glass just one more time.



GREAT WITH...

Game dishes, especially roasted haunch of venison, partridge and grouse.

PRIMITIVO 2012, A MANO

From Liberty Wines
www.libertywines.co.uk
Price £9.99

Made using grapes from vines that are between 70 and 100 years old, grown on what was once a sea bed rich in crustacean fossils, the A Mano Primitivo is a modern-day take on a classic wine made by a Californian and Italian partnership. It's really rich, as you'd expect from grapes picked from ancient vines, bursting with ripe red cherry and blackberry fruit. It's dark to the point of inky black, but retains poise and balance. For a penny under a tenner this really is a steal – best order a case!



GREAT WITH...

Slow cooked shoulder of lamb, or perhaps a spicy lamb tagine.

WHAT ABOUT THE WHITE?

Puglia is, without doubt, renowned for its red wines rather than its white. Indeed, you'd be hard-pressed to find a white wine from the region outside of Italy (or, indeed, Puglia for that matter). Though there are some... Bombino is the most popular grape variety, used to make table wines that are often drunk with simple dishes. Neither particularly 'light' or 'heavy' these wines are regularly described as 'neutral'. Not particularly exciting then... On the other hand a number of growers are starting to plant the Fiano grape variety – the wines produced from this in Campania and Sicily are starting to draw international acclaim, and the climate in Puglia is perfect. Perhaps the future for Puglian white wines bodes well after all?



A number of growers are starting to plant the Fiano grape variety

NEXT MONTH IN ITALIA!

48 HOURS IN CAPRI

Take time out on this stunning island off the Amalfi Coast that offers hiking, cycling, and amazing scenery

EASTER TREATS AND RECIPES

Things to eat over the festive period

YOUR ISLAND RETREAT

Buying property away from the mainland

CLASSIC ITALIAN WEDDINGS

And expert advice on how to plan your own

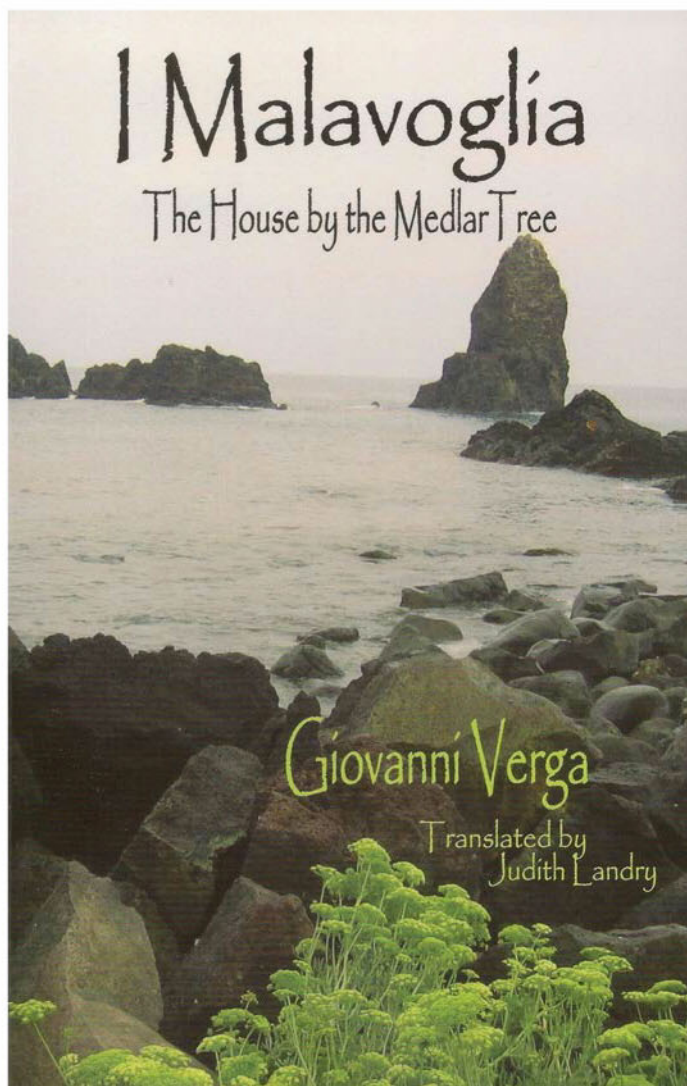
PLUS Four takes on pizza, hiking around Lazio, Italian food to die for, Pinot Grigio tasted, news, book reviews and much more

Subscribe & save money! Turn to page 30 to ensure you never miss an issue!

DON'T MISS ITALIA! ISSUE 125 ON SALE 12 MARCH

IN PRINT

This issue examines two very different titles in our book review section – one an exploration of Europe's finest culinary offerings, the other a brand new translation of **an Italian literary classic...**



◀ I MALAVOGLIA – THE HOUSE BY THE MEDLAR TREE

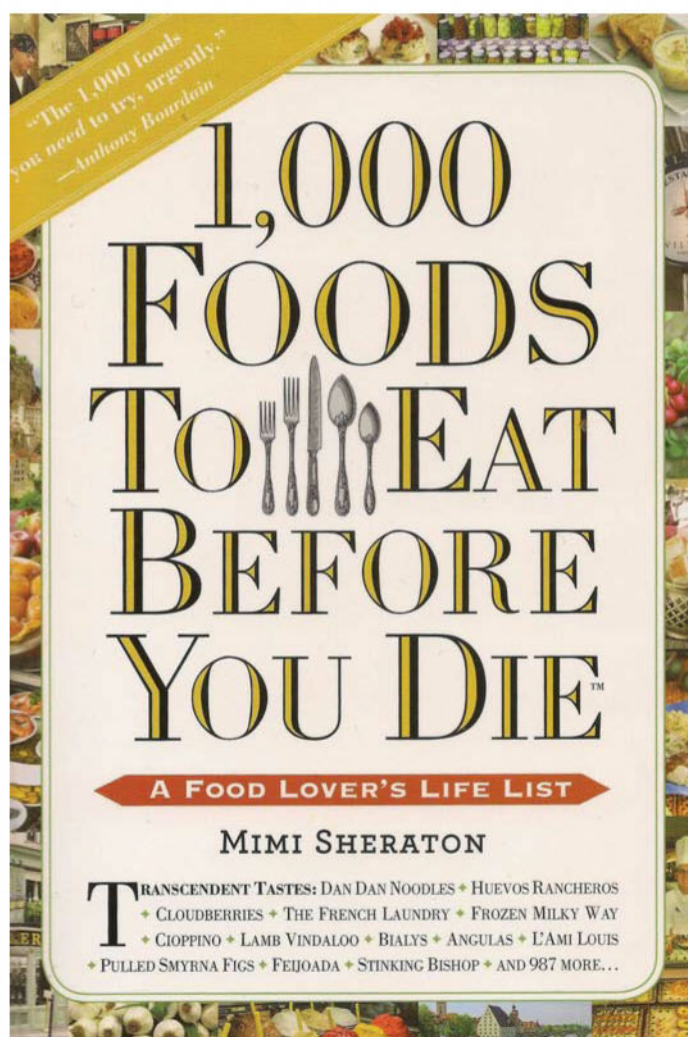
Giovanni Verga, translated by Judith Landry, Dedalus, £9.99 (paperback)
I Malavoglia by Giovanni Verga, first printed in 1881, is considered one of the finest literary works in the Italian language. The story follows the tribulations of a fishing family – the Toscanos, who are known, for no apparent reason, to their neighbours as the 'malavoglia', 'the reluctant ones' – in their descent into poverty after they tragically lose their breadwinner, Bastianazzo, along with a valuable cargo of lupins, when their boat is caught in a storm. Unfortunately, however, this tragedy, and the loss of their house by the medlar tree (hence the English title) is far from the end of their troubles... Newly translated into English by Judith Landry, this is a must read for all lovers of Italian literature.

1,000 FOODS TO EAT BEFORE YOU DIE

Mimi Sheraton, Workman, £16.99 (paperback) ▶

The concept of the bucket list, made popular by the film starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, has been taken and transformed into numerous books that encourage readers to seize the day and experience plenty of what life has to offer. The latest one is this, a guide to eating well while you still can, taking you on a gastronomic journey right across Europe, uncovering culinary delights guaranteed to make you go 'Ahhh'.

The section on Italy is, as you'd expect, extensive, utilizing almost 100 densely-filled pages (the text is very small – be wary if you're getting to be of a certain age!). This isn't a recipe book, though it contains a few; more a guide to must-eat dishes and the best places to find them.



ITALY FLIGHT GUIDE

Let *Italia!*'s flight guide take the hard work out of **planning your trip**. Just pick your ideal destination from our handy map of Italy and locate the corresponding number from the list.

DESTINATION	ORIGIN	OPERATOR
1 Alghero	Dublin	Ryanair
	LDN Gatwick	Thomson
	LDN Luton	Ryanair
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	Thomson**
2 Ancona	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
3 Bari	Dublin	Ryanair
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
4 Bergamo	Bristol	Ryanair
	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Ryanair
	East Midlands	Ryanair
	Knock Ireland West	Ryanair
	Leeds Bradford	Ryanair
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	Ryanair
5 Bologna	Bristol	Ryanair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	Edinburgh	Ryanair
	LDN Gatwick	easyJet
	LDN Heathrow	BA
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	Ryanair
6 Brindisi	LDN Gatwick	easyJet*
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
7 Cagliari	LDN Gatwick	Meridiana, BA*
	LDN Stansted	easyJet
8 Catania	Bristol	easyJet**
	Birmingham	Thomson
	Dublin	Aer Lingus
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet, Norwegian, Thomson
	LDN Luton	easyJet
	Manchester	easyJet, Thomson
9 Comiso	Dublin	Ryanair
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
10 Florence	Birmingham	Flybe
	LDN Gatwick	Vueling
	LDN City	BA, CityJet
11 Genoa	LDN Gatwick	BA
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
12 Lamezia	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
13 Milan	Birmingham	BA, Flybe
	Dublin	Aer Lingus
	Edinburgh	easyJet

DESTINATION	ORIGIN	OPERATOR
13 Milan (continued)	LDN City	Air France, Alitalia
	LDN Gatwick	easyJet
	LDN Heathrow	Alitalia, BA
	LDN Luton	easyJet
	Manchester	BA, Flybe
	Southampton	Flybe**
14 Naples	Birmingham	Thomson
	Bristol	easyJet, Thomson
	Dublin	Aer Lingus
	East Midlands	Thomson
	Edinburgh	easyJet
	Glasgow	Thomson
	Leeds Bradford	Monarch
	Liverpool	easyJet
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet, Meridiana, Thomson
	LDN Luton	easyJet, Monarch, Thomson**
	LDN Stansted	easyJet
15 Olbia	Manchester	Monarch, Thomson
	Newcastle	Thomson
	Bristol	easyJet
	Leeds Bradford	Jet2
16 Palermo	LDN Gatwick	easyJet, Meridiana
	LDN Heathrow	BA**
	LDN Luton	easyJet
	Dublin	Ryanair
17 Parma	LDN Gatwick	easyJet
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
18 Perugia	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
19 Pescara	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
20 Pisa	Belfast	Jet2
	Bournemouth	Ryanair
	Bristol	easyJet
	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Ryanair
	East Midlands	Jet2, Ryanair
	Edinburgh	Ryanair
	Glasgow Prestwick	Ryanair
	Leeds Bradford	Jet2, Ryanair
	Liverpool	Ryanair
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet
20 Pisa (continued)	LDN Heathrow	BA
	LDN Luton	easyJet
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	Jet2, easyJet***

Every effort is made to ensure that the above **flight information** is correct, but do check specific flights before you plan your trip. Some routes may be seasonal.

DESTINATION	ORIGIN	OPERATOR
20 Pisa (continued)	Newcastle	Jet2
21 Rome	Belfast	Jet2*
	Birmingham	Monarch
	Bristol	easyJet
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	East Midlands	Ryanair
	Edinburgh	Ryanair
	Glasgow	Jet2
	Glasgow Prestwick	Ryanair
	Leeds Bradford	Jet2
	LDN City	Alitalia
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet, Norwegian, Vueling**
	LDN Heathrow	Alitalia, BA
	LDN Luton	easyJet, Monarch
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	Jet2, Ryanair
	Newcastle	Jet2
22 Trapani	Manchester	Ryanair
23 Trieste	Birmingham	Ryanair
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
24 Turin	Birmingham	Monarch
	Dublin	Ryanair
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	Jet2
25 Venice/Treviso	Birmingham	Monarch
	Bristol	Ryanair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	East Midlands	Ryanair
	Edinburgh	Jet2
	Leeds Bradford	Jet2, Ryanair
	LDN City	BA
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet, Monarch, Thomson
	LDN Heathrow	BA
	LDN Luton	easyJet
	LDN Southend	easyJet
	LDN Stansted	Ryanair
	Manchester	easyJet, Jet2, Monarch, Thomson
	Newcastle	Jet2
26 Verona	Dublin	Aer Lingus
	Edinburgh	Jet2
	Leeds Bradford	Jet2
	LDN Gatwick	BA, easyJet, Monarch
	Manchester	Monarch
	Southampton	Flybe



AIRLINES

- Aer Lingus www.aerlingus.com
☎ 0870 876 5000
- AirOne www.flyairone.com
☎ +39 091 255 1047
- Alitalia www.alitalia.com
☎ 0870 225 5000
- bmibaby www.bmibaby.com
☎ 0905 828 2828
- British Airways www.ba.com
☎ 0844 493 0787
- CityJet www.cityjet.com
☎ 0871 666 5050
- easyJet www.easyjet.co.uk
☎ 0905 821 0905
- Flybe www.flybe.com
☎ 0871 700 2000
- Jet2 www.jet2.com
☎ 0871 226 1737
- Lufthansa www.lufthansa.com
☎ 0871 945 9747
- Monarch Airlines
www.monarch.co.uk
☎ 0871 940 5040
- Meridiana Airlines
www.meridiana.it
☎ 0871 222 9319
- Norwegian Airlines
www.norwegian.com
☎ 0843 378 0888
- Ryanair www.ryanair.com
☎ 0871 246 0000
- Thomson Airlines
www.thomsonfly.com
☎ 0871 231 4787
- Vueling www.vueling.com
☎ 0906 754 7541

AIRPORTS

- Belfast ☎ 028 9448 4848
- Birmingham ☎ 0844 576 6000
- Bournemouth ☎ 01202 364000
- Bristol ☎ 0871 334 4444
- Cork ☎ +353 21 431 3131
- Dublin ☎ +353 1 814 1111
- East Midlands ☎ 0871 919 9000
- Edinburgh ☎ 0844 481 8989
- Glasgow ☎ 0844 481 5555
- Glasgow Prestwick ☎ 0871 223 0700
- Knock ☎ +353 94 936 8100
- Leeds Bradford ☎ 0871 288 2288
- Liverpool ☎ 0871 521 8484
- LDN City ☎ 020 7646 0088
- LDN Gatwick ☎ 0844 335 1802
- LDN Heathrow ☎ 0844 335 1801
- LDN Luton ☎ 01582 405100
- LDN Southend ☎ 01702 538500
- LDN Stansted ☎ 0844 335 1803
- Manchester ☎ 0871 271 0711
- Newcastle ☎ 0871 882 1121
- Southampton ☎ 0844 481 7777

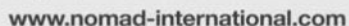
Always check with your airline before planning your flight.

Some of these operators may charge a premium rate for phone bookings. Check before you call.

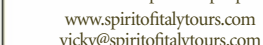
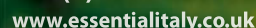
* Starts April 2015, ** Starts May 2015, *** Starts June 2015

HOLIDAYS

☎ (0044) 0 7803 014955 andrewwiffen@btinternet.com



Visit our new website!
www.italytravelandlife.com



www.italytravelandlife.com

www.hotelortodiroma.com - Tel.: +39 06 504 2224

www.villatresjolie.com info@villatresjolie.com 0039 0344 94563.



My Italia!

Author and teacher **Carmela Sophia Sereno** talks about her family background and her love of southern Italian cooking...

TELL ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AND WHERE THEY'RE FROM IN ITALY...

My family emigrated to the UK in the late 1950s from Puglia and Molise in the south of Italy. My *nonni* both worked at the brickworks and both *nonne* worked at the Meltis chocolate factory. My parents met and married and a few years later I came along and then my sister Daniela. My mum's side of the family never felt overly happy in the UK so they decided to return to the sunshine of Molise. My sister and I were both born in Bedford, which is known as Little Italy, due to the large numbers of migrants that moved here in the 1950s. I am now married and a mother to four beautiful *bambini*, Rocco, Natalia, Santino and Chiara.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE A COOKERY BOOK? WHERE DID THE RECIPES COME FROM?

Puglia is referred to as the 'next Tuscany' and Lecce is called the 'Florence of the South'. Here it is possible to live near the coastline, which includes steep, white cliffs, coves with golden sandy beaches and the azure seas of the Ionian and the Adriatic. Not far away is beautiful countryside with gently undulating hills. With endless olive groves thriving in the local red soil, Puglia is Italy's largest producer of extra-virgin olive oil. This area also produces more wine, fruit and vegetables than any other region in Italy. The cuisine is rustic, lovingly prepared and handed down through generations. This area also boasts some of the best fish restaurants in the country.

WHAT IS IT THAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT SOUTHERN ITALIAN COOKING?

Southern Italian cooking is simple, seasonal, mouthwatering and inexpensive. My book tells the story and shares recipes relating to *cucina povera* – 'peasant food', cheap but honest, and in my opinion the best. The seasons are vital, and food has much more flavour when it's at the height of its season too. The south lends itself to incredible pasta, fresh seafood and an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables. Nonna is still trying to perfect my *orecchiette* making skills, but I think she may have secretly given up – she is simply too fast. I just can't keep up with her.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT ITALY? ANY PLANS TO MOVE THERE EVENTUALLY?

I wish I could visit Italy more often than I do to be honest. I tend to go over twice a year to research in different regions. I have recently returned from Venice, which was just simply stunning. Beautiful food and amazing *cicchetti* have inspired me to teach a simple style course at home. In November I headed to Lucca, and this year I'm off to the delicious region of Emilia Romagna in May, to find out more about their regional pasta dishes and hopefully squeeze in a visit to the Parmesan factory too. I often dream of making the move to Italy, but as it stands at the moment it is only a dream I hold very close to my heart.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? MORE RECIPE BOOKS?

A cookery school, working in London or even Italy? Who knows, but my passion is pasta. Making, teaching and still learning myself of course. With this in mind I have started my second cookery book... 'A passion for pasta – a journey through each region.' Here I intend to depict as many shapes as possible as well as showcasing various pasta colouring techniques. Italy has over 600 pasta shapes so my mission is to use some that are not so common in everyday recipes – showcasing regional sauces and offering quick pasta dishes as well as sweet pasta and gluten-free recipes too. This will be a different pasta book, offering an understanding but yet highlighting the ease of pasta making. My aim is to make everyone adore pasta as much as I do, if that's possible!

Carmela's first book, *Southern Italian Family Cooking*, is available on Amazon for £7.99. For more information, visit her website: www.carmelas-kitchen.co.uk



Photography © Carmela Sophia Sereno and Kelly Cooper



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

If you want to tell the story of your relationship with Italy – whatever it is – get in touch with us! Send emails to italia@anthem-publishing.com with the subject line 'My Italia' and a brief description of your story.



Images: Carmela signing books; Nonna Carmela (dad's mum) making pasta; potato gnocchi with spinach pesto

LAKE COMO



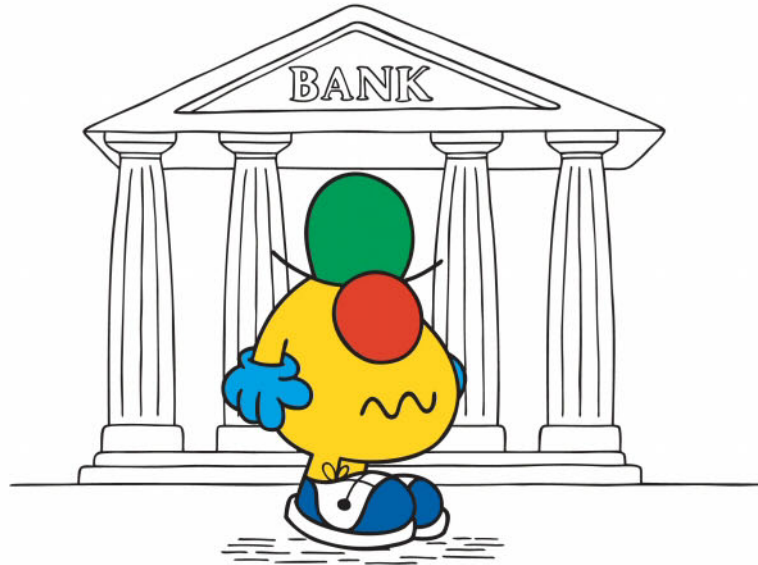
LAKECOMOHOMES

We showcase the largest selection of luxury lakeside villas,
contemporary holiday homes & rental apartments
on the Italian Lakes

t: +44 (0)207 099 0868 | www.lakecomohomes.com

MR. NONSENSE

still uses his bank to transfer money abroad.



MR. FIRST

knows a better way.



Mr. First uses World First, so he skips the bank fees and bags our best currency rates, every time. Splendidly simple. Find out how Mr. First saves rather a lot at worldfirst.com

 World First